

CONSUMING TRANSFORMED ISLANDS: REPRESENTING HUMAN INTERACTIONS
WITH MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURES WITH GOPRO CAMERAS IN TAHITI NUI,
MĀ'OHĪ NUI/FRENCH POLYNESIA

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Preface

La nature hostile, rétive, foncièrement rebelle est effectivement représentée aux colonies par la brousse, les moustiques, les indigènes et les fièvres. La colonization est réussie quand toute cette nature indocile est enfin matée. Chemins de fer à travers la brousse, assèchement des marais, inexistance politique et économique de l'indigénat sont en réalité une seule et même chose.

This hostile nature, restive and fundamentally rebellious, is represented in the colonies by wild brushlands, mosquitoes, indigenous people, and fevers. Colonization succeeds when this indocile nature is finally made docile. The construction of railroads through these brushlands, draining the wetlands, and the annihilating the political and economic existence of indigenous people are really one in the same thing. (Fanon, 1961:240) my translation.

'We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us!'
-JJAdventures, *Bora Bora French Polynesia in 4K*, 2016

Abstract

This thesis is centered on the analysis of videos created by filmmakers using GoPro cameras in French Polynesia. It argues that video representations of interactions between filmmakers and the infrastructures that facilitate their mobilities reveal how the filmmakers relate to the transformed landscapes of Tahiti Nui, the Society Islands. The mobility infrastructures that facilitated French invasion and maintain neocolonial power structures transform the built and natural landscape and people's interactions with and use of these infrastructures is mediated through the use of GoPro cameras. By investigating this body of moving images, I seek to shed light on how mobility infrastructures allow for the movement of capital, ideas, people, and things across built and natural landscapes and between people. I derived two types of interpersonal relationships and activities: romantic and non-romantic dynamic and action activities and non-action.

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GoPro Snapshots

Pape'ete, December 2019.

The marché municipal at the center of Pape'ete ebbs and flows with local and tourist traffic. Some friends sought gifts for our family and friends: monoï oil, cheap pearls, and seed jewelry. After we bought the gifts, our hunger for mā'a Tahiti (Tahitian food) became impossible to ignore. The marché is divided into a handicrafts and gifts section, a produce and meat market, and prepared meals section. The marché is popular with travelers and locals alike: the fish, meat and produce are affordable and fresh, as are the prepared meals. Tourists enjoy the central location and the relative affordability of the handicrafts and the lack of pretention. If the tourists come from colder climates, the variety of fresh tropical fruits is appealing as well.

As we walked towards a stand to buy some chicken fafa (chicken cooked with young taro leaves), some taro, and some cooked bananas, we came across a white couple investigating a produce stand. The male partner's GoPro was affixed to his forehead, and the camera moved along with him as he picked up, looked at, and replaced the fruits and vegetables. His partner mirrored his actions but was not as interested as he was. They left the stand without replacing anything.

It becomes readily apparent that many of these tourists have not encountered the fruits and vegetables sold at the market. The farmers selling their wares are subsistence farmers selling their extra stock. Large grocery stores stocking French, Australian, New Zealand, and American imports surround the marché, but the produce prices are more competitive here. Watching the tourists engage with the produce made me wonder how they understand and will represent agriculture, especially when many people in white settler contexts have adopted concerns about genetically modified organisms, organic agriculture, and food sustainability.

Rangiroa, December 2019.

During my last weekend in Mā'ohi Nui, I took the chance to travel to Rangiroa for something of a writing retreat in Rangiroa. the largest atoll in Mā'ohi Nui, Rangiroa and other atolls in the Tuamotu archipelago are widely renowned for the quality of their snorkeling and diving. I went on a snorkeling and picnic day trip to the Lagon Bleu (blue lagoon), a popular snorkeling spot in the space between motu on the western side of the atoll. I rationalized the procrastination by deciding to conduct observations.

Rangiroa is massive. From the ground, one cannot see the other side. I was told that one can fit all of Tahiti in the lagoon. Numerous pensions and resorts host water enthusiasts of many nationalities, many of them keen to see sharks, manta rays, and exciting tropical fish. I, however, was there to watch them. I was the only single traveler in our snorkeling group, and the only anglophone. Two of the three couples were honeymooners, and at least two of those couples – an older couple and one of the younger couples used GoPro cameras.

The lagon bleu's sandy bottom hosted a few small coral formations. The lagoon's center, however, was home to a large pillar of coral. Following the couple as they filmed themselves and the fish they encountered, I watched them relate themselves to the lagoon, the fish, and to the people around them. They were able to film and share their snorkeling trip as it happened, not just points of time before and after. They could share the sights, sites, and sounds of the lagon bleu and not just rely verbal descriptions of the events that transpired.

The most fruitful and troubling occurrence was yet to come. Coral is a living organism facing the consequences of habitat destruction and anthropogenic climate change. Touching the coral endangers it and can even kill it. One of the couples took a selfie of themselves standing on the coral pillar. The oldest couple, a French couple, scolded the pair and urged them to think

about the consequences of their desires to interact directly with the coral formation. The older couple was ignored.

After the older couple had disembarked from the truck at the end of the trip, the remaining couples shared their frustration towards the older couple: the couple who stood on the coral was upset that they were scolded, not necessarily remorseful for disturbing the coral. While the coral touching was presumably only a small portion of the documented interactions with the environment, just one set of shots in a series of many, I became aware of the fact that I watched the reproduced and incentivized aesthetic vocabularies manifest. Later in the day, as we prepared to leave, our guides had prepared some fish entrails in an effort to attract sharks. A school of small Blacktip reef sharks had gathered around the boat in anticipation. Not long after, the slower, heavier silhouettes of lemon sharks wandered through the growing school of small sharks.

The Lemon sharks were about four meters long each, long enough to make a meal out of me if they wanted. In a haste, I climbed the boat's ladder. After we had all clambered aboard, the excited passengers produced their cameras. The guides threw handfuls of fish guts into the water, clouding the calm lagoon waters with particulate flesh. The stimulus catapulted the sharks into activity, and the passengers exclaimed at every exciting occurrence. Ironically, a member of the older couple that had recently scolded one of the young couples for climbing on the large coral formation lowered his hand, holding a GoPro camera in the water. A Lemon shark attempted to strike the food, and nearly bit the man's hand. With a yell and the shocked warnings of the guides, the older man sheepishly withdrew his hand, but had hit his elbow on the side of the boat in terror. I sure hope he got the shot.

Chapter I: : Visualizing Infrastructural Transformations

Introduction

This thesis investigates the ways in which video compilations, taken on GoPro cameras and disseminated through YouTube, demonstrate how people interact with mobility infrastructures installed as part of French state and empire-making and presently maintained to connect the islands and those living on them to the wider world. These infrastructures are imposed upon and agentively acted upon by Mā'ohi people. I evaluate contemporary representations by engaging with emergent intersections between social media and visual media. I attempt to synthesize social media usage and trends with representations of the Pacific through democratized and quotidian film and photography.

I focus on mobility infrastructures because I am interested in the ways in which movements to and through landscapes are transformed. In addition to this, I am interested in how people represent how they interact with built and natural landscapes (a shorthand I use to describe rural and urban landscapes) and how people come to sensually know these transformed landscapes. It is through understanding these people's transits through (that is, their coming to know these places) these landscapes through the use of infrastructures that we can eventually come to understand how the built and natural landscapes of Tahiti Nui are entangled with the people who live on and move through them.

I do not class GoPro cameras as part of mobility infrastructures. They are not means through which people are made mobile. They are tools through which these mobility infrastructures are documented and represented. In later works, I will discuss the roles, materialities, and implications of YouTube as an online, digital infrastructure through which

movement is made possible through a corpus of representations. GoPro cameras relate to digital infrastructures just as cars and boats relate to mobility infrastructures.

My thesis argues that GoPro users' and GoPro content viewers' engagements and mobility infrastructures reveal the ways through which people understand the ways in which built and natural landscapes are connected and transformed through the building, maintaining, and use of infrastructures. The building, maintaining, and use of infrastructures is a means by which humans relate to the environment, and the implications of my analysis are as follows:

In order to undertake this research, I watched a portion of the video corpus and, after noting common narrative and activity characteristics between the videos, derived a typology through which to categorize and analyze aspects of the videos that demonstrate these entanglements. infrastructures under study must be understood to be inexorably linked to the colonization of Mā'ohi Nui and the creation of French Polynesia – I argue that these mobility infrastructures and those created and used in other colonized places the means by which capital, goods, living and non-living beings, and concepts are made material within colonial contexts. They are built and used to facilitate the process of colonization; to make the landscape and living and non-living beings more legible to the colonizers at the expense of indigenous people and their lifeways. The infrastructures I am interested in are transportation infrastructures such as roads, airports, and ferry terminals; tourism industry establishments and associated infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, vacation rentals, and tourist activities. Natural and cultural resource management infrastructures including but not limited to such as conservation areas, coral and terrestrial gardens, barriers; and governance and legal infrastructures such as taxation, military, and law enforcement establishments are also utilized, captured, and represented on GoPro videos.

The act of documentation and representation is presented to viewers as the finished video. These videos are a means by which individuals (both the filmmakers and the viewers) can manifest gendered, racialized, and classed entanglements with representations of and physical experiences with Pacific peoples and places, particularly the mobility infrastructures that facilitates and facilitated the colonization and destruction of Mā'ohi lifeways and lands. This, however, is just a small part of my main argument. These viewers' and filmmakers' positionalities inform the ways in which they understand the landscapes, infrastructures, and people depicted in the videos.

The content creators map themselves both onto the landscape and onto the wider landscape of YouTube videos, which themselves are mapped onto global flows of economic and cultural capital. The GoPro camera is a delightfully contradictory piece of technology: it is small enough to mount on a 'selfie stick', a helmet, or simply be hand-carried, yet it provides a high-definition rendering of images and is designed to be used in situations inimical to the operation of a normal camera. In addition to this, it is relatively to use, records high-quality images, and is compatible with equipment that allows it to be used to document a multitude of different activities. A content creator may create images that recall the endeavors of physical and social scientists; to clarify and to explain 'exotic' places and peoples.

The echoes of physical and social scientific studies are not always apparent to the tourist-filmmakers but are still worthy of investigation as they inform economic, natural resource, and social development in many of these places. Infrastructural development is an important project of governance. Capital, goods, and people are made increasingly mobile thanks to technological advancements such as efficient and cheapened transportation and increased interpersonal connection through the internet. The development of infrastructures as means to connect

disparate things changes the nature of exchange, mobility between these things, and the nature of the connection.

Since infrastructures transform built and natural landscapes, representations of interactions with infrastructures reveal how people understand governance and development as it articulates with built and natural landscapes. Since political ecology informs my study, I find it necessary to describe the ways through which infrastructures relate to the politicized human-environment relations that engender the proliferation of infrastructural development, tourism, and photographic and filmed representations.

Infrastructures are structures or frameworks that facilitate the efficient and effective functioning of human-made systems or assemblages (Star & Ruhleder, 1996:113-114). Mobility infrastructures are things that allow movement (Barry, 2016:1). For the purposes of this thesis, I focus on mobility infrastructures because I understand mobility infrastructures as a means through which built and natural landscapes are brought into contact, allowing articulations between the landscapes, their inhabitants, and the infrastructures that mediate them. The mobility

My thesis describes the representations of interactions between humans and the environment as mediated both by mobility infrastructures through the use of a camera that occupies a distinct representational and cultural niche. In other words, I am looking at how people process and represent their experiences of Tahiti Nui through the use of GoPro cameras. I am not primarily looking at material put out by tourism agencies, governments, and private corporations (see Kahn, 2010) because I want to investigate how GoPro-mediated and infrastructure-transformed articulations and engagements between montages made possible by these specific pieces of technology as they are made by individuals or small collectives.

Throughout this sentence, I will use the terms Mā'ohi, Mā'ohi Nui (Greater Mā'ohi lands), Tahiti Nui (Greater Tahiti), and French Polynesia. The politics surrounding the use of the term Mā'ohi must be discussed. While embraced in what is called Tahiti Nui/the Society Islands, the term Mā'ohi is disputed in other parts of French Polynesia. It has pointed out to me that the term Mā'ohi is rejected as a vulgar, base term (Saura, 2011:11), in many sociolinguistic contexts, particularly those outside of Tahiti and those consisting of elders.

Mā'ohi Nui is a Tahitian-language term for French Polynesia. I will use the term French Polynesia when I discuss international relations where the political entity of French Polynesia is concerned. Tahiti Nui is used for the same purpose as French Polynesia and Mā'ohi Nui, but I will instead favor Mā'ohi Nui and use Tahiti Nui in place of Society Islands.

The Marquesas (Fenua 'Enata/Henua Enata), Tuamotu, some of the Australs (Tuha'a Pae), and Gambier (Mangareva) islands are sovereign in their own rights: these archipelagoes and their people have different histories and relationships to France and to the centralized governance of Pape'ete, most famously a distinct desire in the Marquesas to align with Metropolitan France rather than the government in Pape'ete (See Mawyer, 2016 for a discussion of state-local friction in pearl farming regulations and markets on Mangareva, Bambridge, 2013 for a discussion of land tenure regimes in the Australs, and Le Goff, 2007 about the political rift between the Marquesas and Tahiti Nui). It is not my intention to lump these culturally, linguistically, and historically differential and sovereign entities with the Society Islands; to do so would not only beget ahistorical and off-base analysis but would be beyond the scope of this paper. Perhaps I will take up this task in future work.

As a Collectivité d'Outre-Mer (overseas collectivity, formerly an Overseas Country or Pays d'outre-mer), Mā'ohi Nui has a significant degree of autonomy in its relationship to

Metropolitan France. The local government has a great deal of power over local development, laws, and other matters, but Metropolitan France holds the purse. Richard Ari'ihau Tuheiava defines the contemporary political situation of Mā'ohi Nui in the following terms.

Le néocolonialisme, c'est l'exploitation des ressources de la colonie pour le bénéfice de la puissance coloniale pour faire des économies, pour éviter de brûler les ressources du pays colonisateur. On est dans le même acte, sauf qu'il y a une connotation beaucoup plus gestionnaire et comptable des choses. Donc, la réinscription de la Polynésie française sur cette fameuse liste onusienne, c'est justement de permettre ce cousin d'air politique et économique qui évite tout acte néocolonialiste en Polynésie. Parce que le dialogue avec Paris me semble fondamental, mais il ne va pas régler la question.

Neocolonialism is the exploitation of the colony's resources for the benefit of the colonial power's economy and so that they may not use up all their own resources. We are in the same act, except now there is a much stronger management and accountancy aspect to all of this. The re-listing of French Polynesia on the U.N. List of Non-Self-Governing Territories is seemingly a way through which a cushion of political and economic air may prevent any neocolonial acts in French Polynesia. Dialogue with Paris seems fundamental to me, but will not be the fundamental solution (Massau, 2011:97, my translation)

French Polynesia (Polynésie française) has been re-listed by the United Nations as a non-self-governing territory, a global recognition of its neocolonial status. This re-listing perturbed Metropolitan France and pro-France partisans in French Polynesia (Polynésie 1ère, 2016). As recently as February of 2019, its autonomy has been augmented, allowing increased governmental authority over the creation of governmental departments (La Dépêche de Tahiti, 2019; Radio New Zealand, 2018). Its political status is still up for debate both in-country, in Metropolitan France, and internationally.

The polity of French Polynesia is related to the rest of the world through its colonization by, and the reorganization of human-environment relations by, France. French Polynesia is located in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Its capital city, Pape'ete, is located on Tahiti, the most populous island, which is roughly 2,600 km from Rapa Nui, 1,100 km from Rarotonga, and 4,200 km from Hawai'i. Of the roughly 280,000 inhabitants, roughly 27,000 live in the

commune of Pape'ete and 28,000 live in the suburban commune of Puna'auia. The only international airport is located in Fa'a'a, between Puna'auia and Pape'ete. Tahiti is the most urbanized island; it is French Polynesia's governmental and economic center. Mā'ohi people occupy all levels of government and administration. Metropolitan and Chinese settlers, Mā'ohi, and tourists alike make use of the infrastructures present in the archipelagos.

The following are examples of infrastructures as documented in the videos under study: airports, roads, ferry terminals, harbors and mooring points, maritime routes, hotels and resorts, electricity, telecommunications, legal and governance apparatuses such as law enforcement agencies, laws, and regulatory regimes. The infrastructures themselves require constant maintenance lest they be overtaken by the environment they are supposedly rendering accessible. Infrastructures are human-environment relations made tangible. The fact that the infrastructures are there does not negate the agencies Mā'ohi people enact. The label 'colonial' is there to accurately attest to the circumstances in which the mobility infrastructures were installed. These mobility infrastructures are installed in order to render the people and landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui accessible to French colonizers and capital that serves the goal of globalization.

Ashley Carse's (2014) lines of inquiry concern the ways in which the Panama Canal, a monumental and multiscalar infrastructural project, changed relationships between nature, the globalizing economy, and people indigenous to and brought to Panama. He specifically investigates the relationship between the Panama Canal as a piece of infrastructure and the landscapes it disrupts, the landscapes that eventually disrupt it, and the people affected by its presence. Carse elaborates on the role of infrastructures in facilitating fluid and multi-scalar relationships between people, infrastructures, and urban and rural landscapes.

Infrastructures produce environments, and vice versa. On the one hand, reservoirs, wetlands, reefs, forests, and other "natural" landscapes may be organized in ways that

reflect the design, management, and politics of technical systems. On the other hand, the ecologies that accrete around infrastructures are irreducible to environmental effects or services. As landscape, infrastructures give rise to political ecologies with winners and losers. (Carse, 2014:6)

What Carse means by these ‘winners and losers’ (ibid.) is that infrastructures and the people who use them are subject to the power inequalities that dictate the ways by which people live their lives and relate to their environments. Everyone has something to win and something to lose; differential power in society and chance determine who wins and who loses. While human- and non-human beings alike are marginalized and traumatized by the introduction of infrastructures, they are also capable of exercising agency and resisting marginalizing biopolitics.

This dialectic between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ is replicated in different contexts. Relationships are imbued with differential power, no matter who or what relates to each other. On the internet, where interpersonal relationships are either conducted in the context of mutual anonymity or hyper-fixation on a named or imaged persona, and where personal information is regarded with an existential apprehension, power is mapped differently on human and non-human relations. The winners and losers of infrastructure installation in colonial and postcolonial contexts are determined based on shifting power dynamics and agentive actions.

Ecology is understood to be the study of relationships between living and non-living beings. Human ecology focuses on the relations between human and non-human beings. Ecology can be used both a metaphor and a concrete descriptor of the relationships made manifest in certain contexts, a process I find particularly useful when natural and built landscapes come into contact. My understanding of human ecology and its kin (to borrow the language of Donna Haraway, 2016) (inter)discipline political ecology emerges from my readings of Bruno Latour (2004), Jane Bennett (2010), Ashley Carse (2014), Anna Tsing (2015), and Donna Haraway (2016).

Political ecology pays particular attention to the politicized relations between humans and non-human beings. Walker notes that many works informed by political ecology often vacillate between the poles of ‘political’ and of ‘ecology’, meaning that oftentimes there is more attention paid to the political pole than the ecological pole (Walker, 2005:73). What is the point, then, of drawing from political ecology if the ecology is left by the wayside? If your aim, like mine, is to understand how the transformations are represented, there isn’t much of one. Infrastructural development projects irrevocably change the landscape: Scott, describing the articulations of Prussian forestry and statecraft, says that ‘The administrators’ forest cannot be the naturalists’ forest.’ (Scott, 1998:22). That is, that which is deemed ‘natural’, that is, the living and non-living beings not built by humans but still in relationships with humans, is less useful to humans when left alone than it is when humans bring it into their fold.

The political ecology of mobility infrastructures is characterized by dramatic changes – changes both visible and invisible to humans. The most obvious changes include deforestation, topographical flattening, bridge building, and paving necessary to build roads; the destruction of marine habitat and displacement of marine life by boats and harbors, using crushed coral and dredged seabed material to build runways, and the demarcation of built and natural landscapes through the use of physical barriers or laws. The reorganization of land tenure and urbanization following the establishment of the CEP radically changed the ways people related to the environment, and French Polynesia’s relations with the Metropole influence how the polity can enact conservation laws and deal with corporations attempting resource extraction, hotel establishment, and other activities.

During the CEP era, the French were flexing their imperial muscles in response to the nuclear arms race and were anticipating the eventual independence of Algeria and the loss of

their testing grounds in the Sahara. The Fa'a'a airport was constructed, roads were paved, and capital inundated the territory in the interest of catering to the French scientists. The infrastructure that brought the military to French Polynesia -- first in massive sailing ships following imagined coastlines and seeking the currents to lead their crews to Terra Australis Incognita, then in steam-ships, then airplanes hungry for the most destructive payloads known to humanity-facilitated the arrival of tourists and of more settlers.

One of the most famous sustainable management practices is the rahui, which is the regulation of access to and use of resources. These regulations were determined by sacredness, seasonal and weather-related needs, the type of resource to be regulated, and other factors. There is an increased interest in management practices that acknowledge and make use of indigenous epistemologies and practices. Whether or not it is because of genuine altruism on the part of Paris-based and Pape'ete-based governments or the idea that promoting rahui will give the government a chance to appear to be tolerant and accommodating of Mā'ohi environmental epistemologies and practices (Bambridge, 2012).

Movements across these landscapes entail and necessitate the consumption of resources: the import and use of fossil fuels, which adds to the burden of greenhouse gases; disturbing or displacing people, animals, and plants (as seen in one of the opening anecdotes); the expansion of built landscapes in a manner that endangers natural landscapes, and the rapid consumption of other resources. These transformations and patterns of consumption are at once alluded to and explicitly pointed out through the process of documentation. The GoPro's rugged construction and ability to be affixed to the body or sports equipment allows filmmakers to get close to the transformations because the filmmakers can get close to the built landscapes, natural landscapes, and the infrastructure that connects them.

I regard YouTube as an archive with an ecology consisting of capital and information. Following Jane Bennett's assertion that non-human agencies and vitalities extend to beings that lack a 'thing-ness', a sense of physical existence as understood by determinants accepted by physical science (Bennett, 2010:loc 612). I extend this argument by articulating how the GoPro camera, GoPro, Inc., the videos created and shared on YouTube and their co-texts, and the interactions between viewers articulate with the human-environment relations created and propagated by the imposition and use of infrastructures used for the perpetuation of France's colonial presence.

But how, then, is nature situated? Castree and Cronon critique human exceptionalism, or the understandings that humans are somehow removed from nature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of the so-called 'noble savage', for example, stems from an ideological construct that placed the 'rational', the intelligent, the developed, the evolved, etc. above the 'natural'. This was one of many paradigms which lead to racist and colonial violence experienced by black, indigenous, and people of color all over the world. This racism is systematized and codified in colonial and imperial governance: for example, French was the only language to be taught in schools until 1981, and other Polynesian languages are being re-introduced in schools (Charpentier & François, 2015:273). Another example of institutional racism is the CEP. By explicitly locating the nuclear testing program in Moruroa and Fangataufa, atolls in the Tuamotus, the Metropole was explicitly devaluing the lives of those atolls' inhabitants and the lives of its colony's indigenous people (Levy-Lubin, 2018, pers.comm).

Yet another example of institutional environmental racism in Tahiti Nui and other islands with large resorts is the acquisition of and destruction of indigenous people's lands for the purposes of developing and sustaining the tourism industry. Another example is the presence of

massive, pollution-generating cruise ships. These resorts are a drain on local energy and resource infrastructures and even contribute to the degradation of the natural landscape: a salient example of this is the building of underwater bungalows and creation of artificial beaches, a process I discuss in detail in chapter three.

Further along in the chapter, I discuss the ways in which GoPro is understood to be a lifestyle product—that is, a product that, when used, conveys a degree of social and cultural capital onto the user in a way that allows them to express some aspect of their identity in relation to the branded item. The GoPro camera is marketed as an action camera: a camera that is to be used to document activities that would otherwise endanger other consumer-grade cameras. The camera allows for high-quality images to be captured from a multitude of angles, even sometimes creating the illusion of seeing from the filmmaker’s own eyes.

The GoPro acts as a means through which the infrastructures can be interacted with through the act of documentation. Because of the camera’s battery life, ease of use, rugged construction, and ease of uploading and disseminating images allows for a multitude of activities and processes to be documented: for instance, the GoPro can be used to film the airplane ride to Tahiti without worrying about using up film stock, recharging the battery, or having the film ruined by airport security X-Ray machines. The camera can be used to take time-lapse photos, can be used with proprietary video-editing software that is (apparently) relatively easy to use (I have poked around on the software without much success), meaning that the camera can be used to film movement through a multitude of different spaces, including those spaces created by infrastructures’ mediations of built and natural landscapes.

Following Barry’s (2010) assertion that ‘the relation between earth and infrastructure exhibits a series of complex temporalities’ (Barry, 2010:2), related to the infrastructure’s

vulnerability to the natural landscape it transforms, it can be surmised that infrastructures (particularly mobility infrastructures), humans documenting the earth and the infrastructures through the use of GoPro cameras, and the earth itself inhabit spaces characterized by a convergence of temporalities. The temporalities are a product of colonial governance (as in, the government of French Polynesia the polity). Some filmmakers create a compressed timeline for their travels to and through Tahiti Nui, often using the mobility infrastructures as an explicit marker of time in transit between destinations and as a destination itself.

The following are short examples of the compressed timeline and the less-compressed timeline. I discuss these videos in further detail in chapter three, but I will use them as foreshadowing examples here. Videos with more compressed timelines, the rapid succession of events or passage of time is done through the means of editing short clips together in rapid succession, giving the viewer short glimpse into the progression of events, and infrastructures such as roads and boats are often used as shorthand for the passage of time or distance. Some videos, however, are less formally edited, most notably Saulius Norkevicius's *Tahiti Island – Teahupoo* [sic] (2015). This video is one long, uncut shot of a hike. Not much happens. There is no music, nothing but chatter and crashing waves acting as score. This long, uncut shot adds to the illusion that more time is passing and that the infrastructures (in this, a hiking trail) is the destination rather than a means of getting to a place.

The articulation of media, mediated places and beings, and those who mediate facilitates the creation and propagation of politicized human-environment relations, just from two different sides of a screen. Following Sontag's statement that photography is the process of the photographer appropriating that which is photographed (Sontag, 1973:loc 31), I would like to

extend that argument to the viewer. The appropriation extends through the photographer, which through disseminating the photographs or videos, extends it to the viewer.

In addition to videos created by individuals or non-corporate collectives, I watched and analyzed video montages promoted by GoPro's YouTube channel. I look into this particular archive because the channel curates content for the purpose of cultivating an accessible archive of videos that advertises the camera and, as I will argue, incentivizes the use of certain aesthetic techniques and the representations of certain activities and places. Following Henri Lefebvre's assertions that space is cultivated through a multitude of social actions and relationships (Lefebvre, 1974) and by situating the videos, video production, and the act of representing and interacting with mobility infrastructures within a specific moment of the history of globalized capital and cultural production.

I discuss how the videos, YouTube, the content creators and people filmed, the user interactions, and Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia itself contribute to the construction of Tahiti Nui's online spaces, social spaces, and physical spaces. One of the major points of analysis seeks to compare how filmmakers make use of certain aesthetic vocabularies, specifically how they describe their movements through the landscapes of Tahiti, Tahiti Nui, and French Polynesia and how they make these movements, the landscapes through which they move, and the infrastructures that mediate the landscapes and render them legible to online viewers. To do this, I will formulate and analyze the different types of videos and what comprises each type. Each type is conceived of varying narrative motivations: for example, romance-oriented videos may focus on the content-creating couple's enjoyment of a trip together and display their affection for each other, while action activities-oriented videos may demonstrate the filmmaker's athleticism, adventurous spirit, and means to participate in said activities.

While I do not, and cannot, seek to profile individual understandings of the ways by which people interact with mobility infrastructures and represent those interactions online, I can draw conclusions about the ways by which people create certain types of videos and how those videos represent and transmit understandings of the places they visit and the activities in which they partake. I will use individual videos as examples to illustrate concepts seen or demonstrated in other videos. However, I will not shy away from discussing a particular interesting occurrence if that occurrence is part of just one video.

I discuss videos made by people of both Mā'ohi and non-Mā'ohi backgrounds and by visitors to Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia and residents. While many content creators clearly position themselves as foreign tourists, the origins of content creators can often be ambiguous. I may locate a way in which the GoPro, the content creator, and the documented tie together a multitude of politicized existences in a colonized and deeply contested space, in the politicized media landscape of YouTube, and along the throbbing arteries of global capital in Mā'ohi Nui, online, and in the mobility infrastructure betwixt them.

My thesis follows multiple lines of inquiry in an effort to synthesize a holistic understanding of the aesthetic vocabularies and geographies inherent to GoPro videos available on YouTube. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to position these GoPro videos within complicated geographies of geopolitical and visual narratives concerning gendered, classed, and raced relationships to mobility infrastructures built and used in colonial and neocolonial contexts. For this thesis, I will be looking at a substantial sample of video montages. This thesis will act as a progenitor for the conceptual framework for my doctoral work on visual geographies, tourism, and empire. Among the literatures that this will contribute to are literatures

focusing on the intersections of political ecology and mediated representations, tourism studies, and perhaps flirts with transport studies.

The need for this thesis is predicated upon a dearth of studies about the intersections and syntheses between the GoPro, a device that incentivizes the documentation of both adventure sports and everyday life in high quality, the assemblage of spaces on Tahiti and the larger assemblage of spaces of Tahiti, Tahiti Nui, and French Polynesia; tourism studies, and media studies. My thesis asks questions that, while perhaps difficult to answer, opens up routes for further analysis. The fundamental question at the root of all the other questions is this: what can we learn from GoPro, videos shared to YouTube, about people's experiences of Tahiti and Tahiti Nui? My thesis is fundamentally a multidisciplinary one: I will make use of my training in Anthropology, Geography, History, Tahitian and French languages, and Art History in the spirit of multidisciplinary, Pacific-centered academic endeavors that makes Pacific Islands Studies the academically rigorous and institutionally significant (inter)discipline that it is. The multidisciplinary approach enables me to assess the assemblages present in the videos, the user interactions in comments and ratings, and the relationships constructing physical and social spaces in Tahiti.

I will draw from literature focused on the deployment of power through infrastructures and literatures focused on the deployment of power through photography. Azoulay (2012), Barthes (tr. 1982), Benjamin (tr. 1938), and James et al. (2018) articulate the ways through which photography is discursively entangled with global capital. Roland Barthes documents the ways through which sentiment and relationships are enacted through the photographer's physical and cognitive positionalities (Barthes tr. 1982). Walter Benjamin describes the ways through a work of art's meaning changes in the context of industrialization (Benjamin, tr.1936). Coleman

describes the ways through which labor is rendered both hypervisible and obscure in colonial photographic projects (Coleman, 2011).

Teresia Teaiwa writes that ‘militourism’ is possible through continued military occupation and the cooperation of the tourism industry (Teaiwa, 1996). By joining the terms ‘military’ and ‘tourism’ this article articulates with Nicholas Mirzoeff’s (2011) discussion about ‘neovisuality’ as a means for totalitarianism by dictation of what is acceptable to represent. Militarism involves massive infrastructural works, necessitating efficiency and effective transfer of goods and people. Thus, militarized landscapes are heavily populated by mobility infrastructures. Mirzoeff re-contextualizes visibility in contemporary political contexts, affixing the Mirzoeff defines ‘visuality’ as hegemonic dictations about the acceptability of images and worldviews (Mirzoeff, 2011).

Mirzoeff’s article describes how visibility is perpetuated in contemporary contexts, specifically contemporary discourses around the so-called War on Terror. I see Mirzoeff’s article in articulation with the ways in which tourists utilize urban infrastructures to perpetuate racialized gazes and representations of the political ecologies of capital cities. This often manifests in racialized gazing, particularly if the filmmaker is white. It is not always apparent to me whether or not the filmmaker is white, so when I speak about this I am only referencing videos in which the filmmaker’s whiteness is made explicit. One of the oldest and most insidious aspects of tourism is institutionalized racism and is understood to be a justification and motivation for colonialism. Racism permeates representations of the Pacific and its peoples.

The power differences inherent to institutionalized racism allow for white people to perpetuate violence by performing a power-imbued gaze (Smith, 2014). Gazes have the power to traumatize and liberate and exercising them is predicated upon the ways one exercises one’s

agency. Racism is incentivized in these depictions because it perpetuates notions about the legitimacy of white supremacy and colonialism. Race and racism figure into tourism because tourism often uses racial stereotypes attract people who seek difference and excitement. Infrastructures are racialized because space is racialized; infrastructure perpetuates inequalities but also resistances to those inequalities.

Wolfe describes the means by which Europeans deployed white supremacy. “As practiced by Europeans, both genocide and settler colonialism have typically employed the organizing grammar of race” (Wolfe, 2006:387). Race is implicated into discussions of political ecology because, as Patrick Wolfe said, race is a means of organization and categorization (ibid.). This can be said about tourism as well. This comes about in discourses around authenticity. Tourism is a perpetuation of racialized gazes and an investment of capital into perpetuating ideas about racial differences. Rob Nixon’s *Slow Violence* contains the essay “Stranger in the Eco-Village”, a chapter describing and critiquing racialized nature as it exists on game reserves in South Africa. To summarize, Nixon states that the wilderness of South Africa expunged of black inhabitants when apartheid was being overturned (Nixon 2011:178). This articulates with decolonization in the Pacific and the marketing of Pacific places according to stereotypes of wild, cannibalistic, and rapacious Melanesians and the easygoing, sexually promiscuous, and accommodating Polynesians. These dynamics are the subtexts and texts of many of these videos, whether the filmmaker is representing Tongan fortifications, singing and the cathedral of Mata-Utu, or the roads and airports of Pape’ete.

My intervention into infrastructural power focuses on specific distillations of power, capital, and desire: the GoPro camera, those who use it, and those who consume the media produced by the camera’s users. My interest in infrastructures germinates from my

understanding that infrastructures are means through which humans transform landscapes, a process that relates humans to the environment.

The title of my thesis is an homage to Katerina Teaiwa's book *Consuming Ocean Island: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba* (2014). Teaiwa chronicles the social and natural history the effects of phosphate mining on the island of Banaba and its people, Banabans. The book's temporal focus spans from 1900 to the future as experienced by the traces of Banaban land folded into the soils of Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Japan, and other places; the Phosphorous coursing through the bodies of farm animals and the bodies who labor to care for them or provide vegetal matter for mass consumption; the whistling of piercing Equatorial winds through a labyrinth of limestone pinnacles. Phosphate is a major component of agricultural fertilizers and is thus instrumental in the development of industrial agriculture and the creation of important infrastructures in colonial and imperial metropolises. Banaba, which was re- and co-named Ocean Island by British phosphate prospectors, was the site of extensive mining, environmental degradation, and the nascent geopolitics of statehood and ethnonationalism in the colonial and post-colonial Pacific.

I chose to name my work after hers because I share her interest in the mediation of places, people, and histories through technology. Our works critique the ways through which mediation descends from exploitation. It is my hope that I continue the work of analyzing mediated representations of the processes of colonial occupation and indigenous resistance.

While Mā'ohi Nui and Banaba share histories of phosphate mining, I will not focus on the past and potential phosphate mining operations on Makatea. (Decoudras et al., 2005; "As All Eyes Are On Raiatea, An Australian Mining Company Moves Closer To Makatea | Pacific Islands Report," 2017; "New group wants mining on French Polynesia's Makatea," 2018.)

Instead my thesis attends to human-environment relations as they manifest in the articulations of people traveling to and through Tahiti, Mā'ohi Nui, and documenting those interactions through the use of a camera that incentivizes and enables specific kinds of human-environment relations.

The study of human-environment relations can be understood as a critical recontextualization of and re-evaluation of the mutual relationships between people and the environment. A multitude of labels for this area of questions exists: environment/society, human/nature, nature/society, and more. These relationships are studied through a multitude of epistemologies and disciplinary paradigms. The implicit separation of humans and the environment, indicated through their discursive juxtaposition in speech and writing, gestures towards the complex spatiotemporal entanglements between humans and the environment.

Human-environment changes are irrevocably changed during the process of colonization, and further changed during the various sociopolitical status changes of colonized and decolonizing places. Humans and the environment mutually and agentively act upon each other, and these agentive actions manifest in a variety of ways: for instance, a paved road close to a waterfall may experience the effects of erosion, floral and faunal incursion, and increased human traffic. The water flows down the path of least resistance, generally downhill. It weakens the road's structural integrity, which is already put to the test by the increasing traffic. In addition to this, the seasonal ebbs and flows of water volume influences how the water will interact with the infrastructure.

The so-called natural landscapes are integral to the representations of colonized places and indigenous people, and both imaging technology and infrastructural development render those landscapes legible to governance and connect the built and natural landscapes. The preface includes a quote from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). Fanon, a Martiniquais

psychiatrist, anti-colonial, and antiracist writer and organizer, outlines the psychological trauma committed during colonization. I include that quote because it succinctly and accurately describes the initial goals of mobility infrastructures: to render the natural landscape, and the built landscapes that pre-existed colonization and the built landscapes thereafter legible (to borrow Scott's (1998) term) to the colonizers and those who follow in their stead.

Bruno Latour articulates the following relationship to human documentation of nature through the application of science:

Scientific production; here is the first obstacle we shall encounter along our way. Political ecology is said to have to do with "nature in its links with society." Well and good. But this nature becomes knowable through the intermediary of the sciences; it has been formed through networks of instruments; it is defined through the interventions of professions, disciplines, and protocols; it is distributed via data bases; it is provided with arguments through the intermediary of learned societies. (Latour, 2004:69)

Latour states that instruments, as applications of science, mediate nature. In this passage, he explicitly discusses scientific instruments. Scientific instruments are a deployment of human power, specifically the power to make data (that is, facts about the world) otherwise unintelligible or beyond our sensory scope legible or otherwise accessible to people. Just as infrastructure is an application of measurement, standardization, and efficiency onto the landscapes, cameras are a means through which the physical world and aspects of temporality are standardized, and efficiently shared through various means. GoPro cameras, by being human-fabricated means through which to make the world known through visualization (the application of classificatory power through visual media (Mirzoeff, 2011), is thus an artefact of science and thus does the work of mediation. The same can be said about infrastructures, both concrete infrastructures such as roads, ferry terminals and routes, and airports; and digital infrastructures such as YouTube.

Infrastructures also change the relationships between people, place, and time. People relate to time differently depending on how they relate to their own identities and to the different spaces through which they move. Someone on vacation, for instance, understands and parses time differently than someone who is actively working, and different cultures conceive of time in different ways. However, given the goal of mobility infrastructures to standardize movement across space, it can be argued that infrastructures change and standardize people's relationships to time. The camera works to capture the fleeting moments of transit across built and natural landscapes, the temporality at once slipping from the image's original context and made permanent by the exact recording of conditions and events (Azoulay, 2010:loc. 1354).

Roger Norum and Mary Mostafanezhad's "A Chronopolitics of Tourism" (2016) addresses the ways through which the power dynamics articulated amongst people and across space alter the very experience and perception of time itself. Temporality and tourism are fundamentally linked due to the ways in which tourists construct the spaces of the places through which they travel. Temporality is an important aspect of infrastructure, particularly because infrastructure is a means by which time is used efficiently. In other words, infrastructures allow for an effective use of and movement through built and natural landscapes. The necessity of effective and functioning infrastructure underpins tourism industries: well-working infrastructure allows for efficient flow of capital, goods, and people in a way that promotes the destination as a place that, though far removed from the alienation many people experience, is easy to get to and move around in. Precious free time must not be wasted.

One of the fundamental texts of Pacific Islands Studies is Epeli Hau'ofa's *Our Sea of Islands* (1993), in which Hau'ofa argues that Pacific Islanders maintained relationships across distance and time by maintaining relationships with the ocean itself. He squarely places the

responsibility for simplistic discourses centered on the islands' smallness and isolation on the settlers who imposed modern and contemporary national borders and upended indigenous lifeways to restrict indigenous movement and resistance (Hau'ofa, 1993:149). His central argument is that the Pacific Islands, or Oceania, should be understood as a place of dynamic mobility and vibrant connections spanning millennia and surviving the atrocities of colonialism, not mere terrestrial specks in a hostile sea (Hau'ofa, 1993:150-53).

YouTube allows for individuals and corporations to create and share videos to wider audiences. This thesis will build off of works concerning visuality, social media, and on YouTube and other video sharing sites. These buildings are preliminary, drawing out conversations between these literatures to work towards a future focus. These buildings will articulate with contemporary and past works in the realms of tourism studies, media and film studies, history, anthropology, and geography. Texts concerning the camera and its parent company are generally consumer reviews, journalism (particularly, unfortunately for the company, pieces dealing with the company's recent financial misfortunes and cautious pieces about the camera's niche within the burgeoning market of rugged smartphones, a future I will discuss in my concluding chapter.). My work manifests a novel intervention into this realm of videos through the internet.

This intervention will shed light upon the tensions between tourist and non-tourist videos, Mā'ohi and non-Mā'ohi videos, and between places filmed and how those places are represented. The tensions are manifested, contested, and transformed in representations. The very ways in which these videos are edited and shared offers insights into the ways in which Tahiti's spaces are constructed and represented. This thesis will not require the use of human subjects. I will be drawing information for analysis from publicly-available videos shared on

YouTube. I use two methods to select videos for study: I used random and non-random selection processes. My processes entailed recording data such as URLs, video names, channel names, dates, and likes and dislikes in spreadsheets, assigning numbers to each of the videos, and running a random number generator to randomly select videos. In addition to this, I sometimes nonrandomly chose videos to analyze based on the title, content, or even elements of the description that piqued my interest. I chose to combine the two methods to both have access to videos that would represent an average GoPro video of travel to and through Tahiti Nui and videos that would be of interest to myself and whoever reads my work. These two methods will offer insights into how the videos' characteristics may influence the order in which videos are listed after the search.

The process of sharing a video and having it listed for public consumption entails the acknowledging of the fact that the video may be fairly criticized and transformed for the purposes of commentary and artistic endeavors. I will also analyze comments, video descriptions, and titles for information about how creators relate to their content. Studying YouTube, the videos posted on it, and the things that those videos depict offers an interesting and informationally rich way to understand how online and non-online spaces are constructed. My thesis studies a specific corpus of videos, created by a specific type of camera, shared on a singular website. This corpus consists of videos taken with GoPro cameras and publicly shared to YouTube, camera is the GoPro camera, and the website is YouTube. This thesis will shed light on the relationships that predicate this construction and will focus on relationships to technology, film's aesthetic and practical conventions, relationships to landscapes, and relationships to global capital. I must again offer a disclaimer: I seek not to plunge into the thick

of these entanglements but to bring these things together in a generative series of conversations that will continue in later works.

Terminology

When I refer to ‘content creators’ and ‘filmmakers’, I am referring to people engaged in the activity of shooting, editing, and posting films. They depict themselves, strangers, people employed in tourism and other service industries, and their travel companions. I will not, however, be using ‘Tahiti’, ‘Tahiti Nui’, and ‘French Polynesia’ interchangeably. ‘Tahiti’ will refer to the island of Tahiti, where the capital city and administrative center Pape’ete is located. ‘Mā’ohi’ is a widely accepted demonym for the indigenous people of French Polynesia. ‘Tahiti Nui’ refers to the islands comprising what used to be the Tahitian Kingdom, ruled by the Pōmare dynasty. Although ‘Tahiti Nui’ has been used to refer to the entirety of French Polynesia in some texts, I will not do so. French Polynesia consists of five archipelagos, each with distinct languages, lifeways, and histories.

Through distinct languages, lifeways, and histories have been entangled since the archipelagos were first settled, in the wake of French colonial establishments, some parts of French Polynesia, there is concern about Tahitian linguistic, political, and cultural hegemony, particularly linguistic hegemony (Tetahiotupa, 2004; Moulin, 1994; Charpentier & François, 2015; Mawyer, 2008). Following this, I will not be using the term ‘Tahiti Nui’ to refer to the entire polity of French Polynesia. I use ‘Tahiti Nui’ for the Society Islands. Rather, I will be using the designation ‘Mā’ohi Nui’. ‘Te Ao Mā’ohi’ (the Mā’ohi world) is also widely used.

My positionality has ramifications for my research both in the present moment and in the future. I am a young white woman from the eastern continental United States. My background is in cultural anthropology, and I focused on critical museum studies, visual studies, tourism studies, and postcolonial studies. My training as an anthropologist occurred in a setting that, while acknowledging the presence and importance of indigenous scholarship and knowledge about my potential topic.

My interest in working in Tahiti stems from the confluence of my interests in museum studies, tourism studies, and visual studies. My budding interest in human-environment relations stemmed from a previous project idea concerning food sovereignty. After studying French in high school, where my education in the language was predicated upon learning about the larger Francophone world, I grew curious about the nature of contemporary French empire in the context of a place that occupies such an elevated place in colonial and postcolonial representational canons.

Following my previous statements concerning the necessity of nuance, I will be articulating my commitment to multiple methodologies. My commitments must, however, be framed and acted upon within the limits of my positionality. I received my academic training in the discipline of cultural anthropology, but I presently find my interests intersecting with the (multi)disciplinary traditions of media studies and geography. I find myself deeply interested in contributing to a body of literature that is predicated upon critical understandings of whiteness. I orient myself towards the rhizomatic qualities of visual geographies. By using assemblage theory, I will be able to assess the videos from a multitude of theoretical and aesthetic angles. It is my hope that, through the use of assemblage theory, I will be able to use a multitude of methodologies as well so that I may learn from and deploy a multitude of methodologies.

There will be a multiplicity of theoretical frameworks used to form a synthetic theory about the synthesis and deployment of distinct aesthetic vocabularies and the visual geographies that give rise to and imbue these video montages. While one can use film and photography theories to analyze some of the technical aspects of filmmaking and about the aesthetic vocabulary that influences filmmakers, one must also take YouTube's novel aspects into account. These aspects have distinct and important implications and impositions upon the usage of film theory, ethnography, and even place-and position-conscious methodologies to study YouTube videos. It is important to remember that YouTube is fundamentally an online network geared towards content creation and distribution to wider audiences, not as a means by which individuals maintain social relationships.

YouTube and social media adjacent to it give rise to what have been called parasocial relationships, which can be understood as the process by which a content creator's content facilitates a one-sided relationship in which the audience believes they are closer to the content creator than they are (Richard Wohl, 1956). This dynamic of coexistence and skewed pseudo-reciprocity exists in the realm of travel videos. I would argue that human relationships to the technology are another variety of relationships between humans and the environment.

Travel videos are narrated, scored, silent, or any combination of these states. The videos promote a simultaneity of experiences for both the filmmaker and the audience: if done well enough and with the right kind of equipment, the content creator can make a viewer feel like they are present at the moment of capture, experiencing whatever the creator is experiencing. Viewers leave comments and ratings in the form of likes or dislikes signified as thumbs-up or thumbs-down symbols and also write commentary. YouTube's primary function is a video hosting and sharing site, and in recent years monetization and advertising revenue has incentivized sharing,

the use of high-end equipment, and the acquisition of video production skills. Despite the expense incurred by massive bandwidth usage, Google acquired the site in 2006 and implemented Google AdSense, an advertisement management program that automates transactions between advertisers and content creators (“How to Make Money From Your Website with Google AdSense,” n.d.). By using AdSense, content creators may make money off of their videos provided that they adhere to copyright laws and rules pertaining to the videos’ contents.

YouTube came about in an online environment that was fundamentally about crafting a distinct and personalized presence on the Internet. For example, content creators who wished to share video media had to either code a video player into their website or make their videos downloadable (Knudsen, 2018). YouTube was invented to fill the then-vacant niche of video streaming and storage site, and its expenses are covered by advertising revenue and the support of Google, which acquired YouTube in 2006. The site itself is a type of infrastructure, facilitating the movement of viewers, creators, advertisements, advertisers, money, and videos.

The videos under study range from home movies to professionally-done advertisements. Home movies are amateur films made for the express purpose of documenting family life. These films, however, need not exclusively depict quotidian happenings within the walls of a family dwelling: many home movies record vacations, outings, and other adventures outside the home. These videos are shared to facilitate viewing by friends and family, to usher increased traffic and ad revenue to the creator’s channel, and to join a community of representations of travel and activity.

The camera, the company that created it, and the company’s various YouTube channels and sponsorship deals offer a body of literature for analysis. I will start by describing the camera,

how users interact with it, and what engenders critical analysis. The GoPro is a small, high-definition camera that can be easily hand-carried or mounted on the body or equipment. The camera is manufactured by GoPro, Inc. Nick Woodman, the company's founder, was motivated by his understanding of a need for a camera that brought high-quality image capture in the context of action sports and other activities to a wider audience (Mac, 2013; Graser, 2014).

After elucidating the camera and camera company's history and current media presences, I will explain how the GoPro's marketing, technology, and multiple channels of content dissemination and creation enable specifically classed, raced, and gendered relationships to Tahiti Nui that simultaneously reveal and obscure the mobility infrastructures that facilitate tourism and colonialism. I will discuss how the camera's technical aspects, the company's history and representations of itself and the camera's users and content consumers, and the representations by those consumers and users work to build distinct relationships to Tahiti Nui's mobility infrastructures.

The infrastructures, which facilitate the movement of tourists in a post-CEP Mā'ohi Nui, are advertised to tourists in terms that relate to the landscapes European and American tourists can understand. Mā'ohi Nui is vast – its exclusive economic zone covers around 5,000 km². Air Tahiti, the domestic passenger and freight airline, maps Mā'ohi Nui onto Europe as if Europe is a standard of measurement. Tahiti is positioned on top of or very near to Paris, the capital of Metropolitan France. By mapping this autonomous overseas country, a polity in a particular neocolonial arrangement with France, onto all of Europe, Air Tahiti implicitly encourages travelers to think about Mā'ohi lands in terms of the power that colonized them.

Air Tahiti is a means through which people and goods move across vast distances but does not access all islands. While Mangareva, some of the Tuha'a Pae (Australis), a few of the

Eastern Tuamotus, and many of the Marquesas islands are connected, there remain many islands (usually less densely populated places) that are not connected. One example is Rapa, an island in the Tuha'a Pae that is so far away from the rest of the archipelago that the only way to get to it is to take a cargo boat that comes once a month.

Figure One: Air Tahiti Network Map (“Carte du Réseau Air Tahiti / Air Tahiti Network: A Network as Vast as Europe,” 2018)



Visualizing the distances and physical arrangement of Mā'ohi Nui is a part of many of the videos under study, whether by inserting maps into the video, filming travel along roads, maritime routes, and flights. Understanding the means by which one accesses Mā'ohi Nui through the use of infrastructure helps viewers understand the process of travel and the ways through which infrastructure allows travelers to access the environment and mediate it.

The camera's technical specifications, namely its high-definition image capture and rugged construction, enable it to be used in situations that normally endanger the integrity of the camera or the images it captures. The camera may be carried on the body, mounted on equipment, or hand-carried. Woodman emphasizes the novelty and success of coupling of the filmmaker and the camera. Much has been made of Woodman's love for extreme sports and intense interest in making these exciting activities legible and accessible for wider audiences

(“GoPro Official Website - Capture + share your world - Top Ten Q&A from Nick Woodman’s Reddit AMA,” n.d.; Chapman, 2013; Brett, 2015). It is important to know that these depictions are situated within a genealogy of celebrations of distinctly gendered and classed representations of the contemporary technology industry.

At the time of this writing, there has been a distinct development and concentration of intense admiration of wealthy, technologically adept men in a multitude of popular consciousnesses. Tourist enterprises have taken full advantage of the Internet’s experiential capabilities. The online expansion of spaces in which business may be done, coupled with increased access to the internet and to transportation and media concerning potential destinations engendered new ways of relating people to the practice of tourism. In addition to increased participation in the tourist industry, the Internet allowed travelers to create and participate in internet fora focused on traveling and tourism (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) and virtual tourist experiences (see Boellstorff, 2015).

My main findings can be summarized in the following manner. While there are many different interpersonal dynamics between filmmakers and activity types depicted in the larger corpus of GoPro-mediated representations of interactions between tourists and mobility infrastructures in Mā’ohi Nui, I distilled the following loose binaries of relationships and activities in an effort to eliminate false equivalencies inherent to my previous type names. The loose binaries (they are broad in scope as to include as many video types as possible) are: action-intensive versus non-action-intensive. The relationship dynamic binaries primarily represent romantic relationship dynamics versus non-romance-oriented (that is, platonic relationships and focus on the dynamic between nuclear families rather than documenting a honeymoon or romance-celebrating trip between childless couples). I found that most of the videos I watched,

including those that are sampled for study, depict action-intensive activities and romantic relationship dynamics. Amongst the activities most widely represented amongst the study sample are snorkeling, SCUBA diving, jetskiing and boating, hiking through the wilderness (I do not consider walking through built landscapes action or adventure intensive). The filmmakers and the people represented in the videos make use of colonial mobility infrastructures in the following ways: they film travel through built and natural landscapes through the use of roads, they film their arrivals, departures, and inter-island flights, they film maritime routes and facilities, and they film pieces of infrastructure that aid their access to natural landscapes, such as underwater guide ropes and hiking trails.

During my time in Tahiti, I observed many interactions between GoPro-using filmmakers and mobility infrastructures: Spanish-speaking tourists doing a sunset photoshoot at a public beach park, head-mounted shoppers browsing local foods and handicrafts, a honeymooning couple taking selfies on a coral formation (an interaction that permanently damages bleaching coral), and a traveler extolling the ‘revolutionary’ technology. Watching people document their travels and the ways they interact with built and natural landscapes, themselves mediated by infrastructures, gave me insights into how people map themselves onto these landscapes as they document them. I discuss my findings in chapter three, where I elaborate upon how people’s embodied experiences of these landscapes and the process of documentation offers insights into how they represent places.

Chapter Outline

This is a four-chapter thesis. This chapter introduces my study by discussing the infrastructures under study and the work of transformation in the context of Tahiti Nui. The

second chapter discusses the contexts and natures of mobility infrastructures in Tahiti Nui.

Chapter four constructs the video typologies and outlines the 30 videos selected for visual and discourse analysis. The use of typology will be justified, the data collection methodology will be explained, and the video types will be analyzed and articulated with the political ecologies of tourism. I will describe the characteristics prevalent in videos of a certain type, offering a comparative approach. Each of the four types and mixes between the types will be analyzed in its own subsection. I will describe how the videos depict relations between humans and the environment, specifically how representations of interactions with mobility infrastructures mediate these relations.

In chapter three, I conduct an analysis of the videos to determine how they represent human-environment relations as they manifest through interactions between humans, built and natural landscapes, and mobility infrastructures. The videos not selected for in-depth analysis will be used for comparisons as well, but not analyzed as extensively as the ones I selected. The following technical aspects will be discussed in each section: perspectives: first and third-person perspectives, the self-referential gaze. This part of the analysis, the first of a two-part human-environment relations analysis, will emphasize the particular first-personness that the GoPro facilitates because of its rugged construction and portability.

Then, I will discuss how editing shapes the videos' narrative thrusts and articulates raw footage with the mobility infrastructures of YouTube, the GoPro hardware, software, and GoPro, Inc. at large. I will conclude this portion by analyzing the videos' co-texts and contexts: video comments, ratings, and text in the video description. After the technical aspects are discussed, I will conduct an analysis of the representation of bodies, landscapes, and activities. That will be the second portion of my human-environment relations analysis. Chapter four concludes the

thesis, articulating final thoughts and further research questions. It is in this section that I articulate my findings with those of other texts. I then lay out plans for future study and connect them to my current work.

Conclusions

I see this thesis building upon and articulating upon important works concerned with representations of colonized places and spaces in French Polynesia and specifically in Mā'ohi Nui. My thesis will be a novel intervention that will hopefully spark discussions about the nature of the GoPro as it exists as a tool through which to mediate experiences of movement through the landscapes of Tahiti, Tahiti Nui, and French Polynesia. I hope that my work will lead into further conversations about the materiality of mobility infrastructures, representations of temporality, and the ways through which people represent human-environment divides. There is much to be written about in terms of visual geographies, particularly in a place that seems to be at the intersections and edges of so many historical events and experiences. I anticipate finding and elaborating upon the commonalities and differences between the videos, specifically how interactions with colonial mobility infrastructures are represented. By incorporating textual analyses of the video descriptions, intertitles, and titles, I will offer a nuanced and novel look into the experiences of landscapes comprised of social and physical spaces in and of Tahiti, Mā'ohi Nui, French Polynesia.

Chapter II: On GoPro and the Mediation of Tourism

Introduction

Bernard Smith's text "European Vision and the South Pacific" (Smith, 1950), a fundamental text for the study of European deployments of power in the Pacific through mediated representations. Smith's piece begins with an assessment of scientific representations of human and non-human beings. Bernard Smith's article focuses on European representations of newly encountered Pacific landscapes. The European voyages through the Pacific opened the islands up to European incursion and laid the foundation for an economy of European interpretations of these places, peoples, and histories. Smith reviews scientific and documentary art created by crewmembers on European exploratory voyages in the Pacific. He reviews engravings and drawings of specimens and landscapes collected for scientific studies.

Smith's focus on the production and circulation of these images, which were brought into Europeans' imperially-inclined imaginations through books. In addition to contributing scientific data about the transit of Venus and the geographic features of the South Pacific, the military and scientific institutions seemed to want to establish an economy for European representations of the Pacific. Smith offers observations into the first Western visual representations of Pacific islands. Smith extensively details depictions of Tahitians and their home islands' landscapes. The European artists soon began making comparisons to Eden (Smith, 1950:81). Smith details the Europeans' changing interests in different aspects of Tahitian culture, specifically funerary rites at the *marae* (spelled in Smith as *morai*) (Smith, 1950:83).

This piece is useful because it elucidates the early history and visual geographies of printed images of the Society Islands. Smith peppers the text with images created by artists and

scientists on European expeditions. I paid particular attention to passages concerning European representations of visits with Tahitians and their observations of the landscape. Smith's assessment of the deployment of power through the means of scientific classification is a direct critique of the marginalization of Tahitian and Mā'ohi lifeways. Smith basically says that the work of imaging done by these artists lays the groundwork for visualizations produced by the French colonial government, the French Polynesian government, and tourists.

Smith's piece articulates nicely with Jennifer Newell's *Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans, and Ecological Exchange*, Miriam Kahn's *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard* and "Tahiti Intertwined: Ancestral Land, Tourist Postcard, and Nuclear Test Site", Kahn's pieces were discussed and Newell explores 'mutuality of agency' during the early interactions between Europeans and Tahitians (Newell, 2010:6). Newell pays particular attention to the dynamics between European introductions of invasive plant and animal species such as guava, European swine breeds, and cattle. Newell's work as a good example of using Western historiographical methods to make indigenous perspectives known. This is because she uses indigenous and European resources to explain a multi-sided ecological, cultural, and material exchange.

By focusing exclusively on the GoPro, I contextualize a specific subset of cameras by situating them within a history of representations. I further elaborate on this by discussing how they mediate tourism. I have previously discussed how the GoPro camera's marketing incentivizes its use in certain situations, by certain people. This chapter examines the ways through which GoPro can be used to mediate Mā'ohi Nui landscapes, which in turn are mediated by infrastructures. I will begin this chapter by tracing the ways by which infrastructure created in colonial contexts (for which I use the shorthand 'mobility infrastructures') both mediate landscapes and are mediated through filmed representations. I will elaborate upon the nature(s)

of Mā'ohi and non-human agencies in regard to the use of and resistance to these infrastructures in in this chapter. I begin by outlining the relationship between power and institutions, then transition to a discussion of the representation of histories and the history of representation in Tahiti and conclude with a discussion of the GoPro company and its products as means by which the built and natural landscapes of Tahiti Nui and Mā'ohi Nui are represented.

Infrastructure is political. Its presence and use are means by which politicized relationships play out through the demarcation of space and the allocation of resources. Andrew Barry situates infrastructures within a spatio-temporal dynamic predicated on the infrastructures' vulnerabilities to disruption by so-called 'natural' causes (Barry, 2016). That is, the natural landscape rendered accessible and legible by the infrastructure is also endangering it. Many political ecologists understand nature and non-human entities to be agentive actors; that is, these beings have an imperative to hold their space and an imperative to preserve themselves. The power located in and deployed through infrastructures and institutions shapes how people relate to the environment and how the environment relates to people. Recall Castree's discussion of the politics of nature's place relative to humanity: Castree posits that nature is a spatialized and temporalized phenomenon, a phenomenon that can be categorized in brief as a collection of events, times, and concepts deemed to be foundational, fundamental, or a source of origin for humanity and society. I interpreted this to mean that nature's fundamentality is what makes it understood to be in opposition to humanity in settler societies (Castree, 2014: 10-2).

These conceptions of the interactions of humans and the environment as classed by the so-called human-environment separation, I argue, are caused by humans building themselves away from their environmental contexts. I am no anarcho-primitivist, but I think that the use of infrastructures and built environments to further alienate ourselves from potential sustainable

relationships to the environment can lay the foundation for structural injustices such as those that manifest fascism and colonialism.

Star et al. list, among other things, the following fundamental attributes of infrastructures: infrastructures are transparent (that is, the means of their use is readily apparent), the infrastructure becomes visible (an assertion I would like to articulate with Scott's (1998) idea of legibility), and that the infrastructure has specific spatiotemporal contexts (Star and Ruhleder, 1996:113). Jane Bennett's book *Vibrant Matter* (2010) discusses the agency and vitality of non-human entities and actors, an idea already shared by many indigenous peoples and one that white settlers have slowly returned to. Settler colonialism and other types of colonialism work to expunge and fundamentally change the ways through which indigenous people relate to the environment, often by forcing them to use infrastructures while depriving them the benefits that come with the use of and institutionalization of infrastructures. I define mobility infrastructure as infrastructures built expressly for the purposes of facilitating and perpetuating the work of colonialism, and whose contemporary uses facilitate the continued colonial presence. Infrastructure ultimately works to make natural landscapes more accessible by easing the process of movement across and to them: this accessibility is made possible through standardization, a process that makes the infrastructure easier to maintain and renders the presence of governance or management more apparent (Star and Ruhleder, 1996:12).

French Polynesia's mobility infrastructures connect the polity to the wider world and to the constituent archipelagos. The following examples of infrastructures facilitate mobility and exchange. The example I will discuss now is the international airport, Fa'a'a airport. The Fa'a'a airport is located in the city of Fa'a'a, southwest of Pape'ete. The airport was built in 1961 to facilitate the movement of goods and people from Metropolitan France to Mā'ohi Nui. This

piece of infrastructure, which facilitates the movement of capital, goods, and people throughout Mā'ohi Nui and all over the world, appears in videos to mark moments of arrival and departure. The airport was built at the beginning of the CEP (Centre d'Experimentation du Pacifique, the French nuclear testing program.) and no doubt played a role in circulating French bureaucrats, military personnel, capital, and materials through the polity.

Resorts serve as a subset of infrastructures, allowing interactions between travelers, local workers, and corporations that facilitate the movement of tourists in carefully orchestrated ways. Resorts act as infrastructures by circulating money, images, and people. This circulation simultaneously moves people within the resort grounds, through the place where the resort is, and in and out of the resort itself. The circulation relies on the presence of infrastructure that can be governed in a way that renders it 'safe' for tourists from developing countries: despite the need for there to be a clear distinction between the place people come from (be it the presence or lack of presence of traffic, different weather, different languages, et cetera), there must be familiarity in the infrastructure's usability: this necessity aligns with infrastructure's ultimate goal of standardization.

Infrastructural efficacy is couched in understandings that the infrastructure's durability is what makes it useful, makes it good. Andrew Barry, in an effort to understand how infrastructures act as lenses through which human and environment relations may be viewed, characterizes the spatiotemporal realities of infrastructure in very dynamic terms:

Infrastructures corrode and crack and shift and corrode all the time. Their stability cannot be assumed, but needs to be maintained....It is perhaps not surprising that infrastructures such as railways, pipes, satellites, lights, roads, and cables often co-exist with a second-order of infrastructure of infrastructure of information production, which keeps their movement and transformation within working limits...No wonder that a well-maintained infrastructure is sometimes taken to be an index of good government. (Barry, 2016:1)

Barry (2016) and Carse (2014) thus imply that infrastructures are a means through which governance is enacted. The information and legibility (Scott, 1998) I bring up is less formal in terms of purpose. I do not seek to understand how governance is enacted through the rendering of information understandable to governing authorities, but I seek to understand how that information is produced and what it means for larger understandings of human-environment relations.

The building of colonial Mā'ohi Nui was predicated upon the complete reorganization of relationships-interpersonal and between humans and the environment. Natural and built landscapes mutually influence each other. Jane Bennett, a philosopher who explores the materialist aspects of political ecology, states that even objects understood to be inert, such as metal, are imbued with vitality and their agency stems from that vitality. She argues against moralistic assessments of agency as it manifests in vitality, that is, the understanding that things have vitality because the necessity for the improvement of human society, not because the non-living entities have a fundamental condition of alive-ness. In colonial and developing world contexts, where indigenous understandings of human-environment relations are often supplanted by settlers'.

Development projects and the legal hegemony of settler laws have radically altered the relationships between indigenous people and settler governance. The codification of sustainability as an aspirational discursive process wherein culture and the natural landscape are commodified and configured towards the influx of traffic and augmentations brought about by capital. Oftentimes the infrastructures used to facilitate destructive economic activities such as mining, logging, unsustainable fishing, and militarization are repurposed for development projects, including sustainability and tourism development. I will elaborate upon the power in

infrastructure in chapter four, where I will continue to link the video data to the representations of human-environment relations through interactions with mobility infrastructures.

Let us return to the GoPro, the (camera) lens through which I seek to understand how infrastructures serve as a relational location and process for and between humans and the environment. If the process of image making and dissemination is a process through which power is deployed and relational processes are made material (Mirzoeff, 2011; Barthes, 1980), and infrastructures are situated and mediate in such a way that they reveal facts about the landscapes that they inhabit and those who invest the capital, knowledge, and person-power into building and maintaining them.

A series of status changes occurred from the end of World War II to the end of the century. After being given French citizenship in 1946, internal autonomy was granted in 1977 then furthered in 1984. Despite the autonomy on paper, the French colonial presence looms large in the lives of many Mā'ohi people, particularly on Tahiti. In recent years, many Mā'ohi have become anxious about the faltering economy, and have been feeling the effects of the CEP's departure.

Many opportunities for higher education, healthcare, and careers exist only outside of Mā'ohi Nui. Many of the highest-achieving students are drawn to study in the metropole through scholarships and through the presence of programs and careers not available in Mā'ohi Nui. In their seminal study *Moruroa et nous* (Moruroa and Us), Peter de Vries and Han Seur document the massive influx of capital, building materials, and French officials to Hao, Moruroa and Fangataufa, and Tahiti (de Vries & Seur, 1997). In these places, workers from other parts of Mā'ohi Nui were brought to these islands to work relatively well-paying jobs for the CEP. This

mass migration contributed to the centralization of urban centers and to the transition away from subsistence farming and familial land tenure in many parts of Mā'ohi Nui.

After widespread protests in Pape'ete and around the world, nuclear testing ceased in 1996. Then, the flow of capital ebbed. Buildings and infrastructures once supported by this money began to crumble. The government of Mā'ohi Nui began to look for solutions to the looming economic crisis: at this point in time, black pearl prices were still relatively high and vanilla was still exported. However, tourism from Europe, East Asia, and the Americas was understood to be an economic buoy to the overseas collectivity.

Mā'ohi languages were dually menaced by French and, ironically, Tahitian. Tahitian was both marginalized and used as a vehicular language in schools, churches, publications, and in the realm of politics. Children seeking higher education in remote islands are often sent to a more populous island in their archipelago or to Tahiti, a process that alienates them from their local dialect and from their familial land. Families may follow their children, causing issues with land tenure and subsistence. The centralization of administration, particularly in Tahiti, where greater Pape'ete covers a great deal of the northwest coast, has contributed greatly to a crisis in land tenure and employment.

The current century has already seen massive globalization facilitated by advances in information and transportation technologies. Deep anxieties about the security of empire and the process of decolonization manifested after the terrorist attacks and economic crises that punctuated the early 2000s. Despite the ease of travel, tourist travel sharply declined after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and again during multiple global financial crises. Much has been written about the ways in which Mā'ohi Nui is marketed to honeymooners and to romance-seeking tourists (Kahn, 2014:144–67). While still heavily marketed as a honeymoon destination,

the marketing has diversified to appeal to families, sports enthusiasts, and people interested in French colonial history.

Simultaneously, the advances in imaging and computer technology allowed for more and higher-quality images to be shared. The archive moved online. Archives, themselves, are mobility infrastructures built for the purpose of retaining and transmitting information that renders places, people, and histories legible to power. Archiving is a part of high modernist wisdom and projects for improvement and serves as a foundation for the collection of scientific and cultural data. By moving the archive online, the archiving power gives the data a new life across time and space. In the context of Mā'ohi Nui, archival material is endangered by inclement climate conditions and the fact that archival material is split between Mā'ohi Nui and the metropole. During a conversation with a colleague, the colleague informed me that archival material found in Tahiti may be incomplete, and the remaining material is only to be found at the archives nationales d'outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence, France.

The advent of the new millennium was represented as a time to embrace the future and all the promise it holds. This sentiment, deeply optimistic and imbued with an understanding of progress and development as predicated upon the acceptance of linear understandings of time, pervades discourses: development discourses in particular. This depiction of the new millennium as a reason for the improvement of the human conditions was coupled with increasing concern about anthropogenic climate change, the emergence and spread of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and noncommunicable illnesses such as obesity and its comorbid disorders, and nuclear weapons proliferation.

On a colonial and metropolitan level, the debates surrounding the decolonization of Mā'ohi Nui intensified, particularly in response to the election of independence-oriented former

president Oscar Temaru. Temaru's party, Tavini Huiraatira, intensely advocated for independence, and in 2004, under his governance, Mā'ohi Nui's official relationship with France radically changed once again: Mā'ohi Nui's status shifted from that of an overseas territory to that of an overseas country/collectivity, a status shared by New Caledonia. During the 2014 presidential elections, however, pro-French president Edouard Fritch won, slowing the advancement of any decolonization agenda.

Mediating Tourism

Tourism plays an essential role in Mā'ohi Nui's economy. Public administration and agriculture comprise the other important sectors. Resource extraction has significantly altered the structure of Mā'ohi Nui's economy. Images are also a resource. Images are bound up with global flows of economic, political, and cultural capital which entangle their viewers and producers in lengthy and profound historical processes. The creation and circulation of images aligns with resource extraction industries operating in Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia. It is a widely held assumption that resource extraction in Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia is limited to pelagic and inshore fisheries, pearl cultivation, whaling, phosphate mining, and prospecting for seabed mining. However, this list is limited to tangible resources that are usually refined to create consumable commodities. It is easy to forget the significance of the image resource extraction economies.

Tahiti and Tahiti Nui's built landscapes are the product of Mā'ohi presence and resistance and colonial incursion. The natural landscapes and built landscapes do not bound each other in the sense of limiting mutual incursion. In other words, built landscapes, infrastructures in particular, offer points of access to each of these landscapes. A few examples come to mind:

the water-filled space between a seawall and the land hewn from dredged matter hosts a pocked underwater-scape of fish nests, improbable in their population and out of sight of the daily commercial and industrial traffic. Along the highways, where the road was carved from the hilly volcanic landscape, concrete walls stuck with poles anchor vegetation nets, while small gardens and wild trees crest the hilltops. And, let us not forget the parade of insects that visit (plague?) our dwellings.

Despite our best efforts, humans cannot exclude themselves entirely from the natural landscape. Nature itself is a consequence of human exceptionalism, a paradigm that positions nature in opposition to humans and human-built landscapes. This paradigm ignores the fact that human-built landscapes are ecosystems in of themselves; the living and non-living beings that inhabit these ecosystems act agentively in their own ways, a concept that I will discuss in chapter four. While humans and non-human living beings are understood to act agentively relative to built and socially constructed environments, I argue that both the mobility infrastructures (that is, the built structures that facilitated and facilitate the work of French colonial governance) and the GoPro used to mediate them may have degrees of agency.

The infrastructures that enable tourists and tourist-filmmakers to visit and move around in certain spaces are the artefacts of colonialism and globalizing/ed capitalism. The social and technological infrastructures that engendered militarization and the installation of governance structures modeled after Western systems both rely on and sustain the extraction of natural resources and of images (Kahn 2011). I will look at how these videos make use of infrastructures predicated by and activities adjacent to resource extraction industries. I will even meditate on the question of tourism's status as a type of extractive industry, a question that will tie into discussions of militarism and empire (see Teaiwa, 1999; Sturken, 2007; and Gonzalez, 2013). I

will follow these authors' arguments that tourism builds upon and exploits existing mobility infrastructures and build upon them by explaining how the GoPro mediates them.

Miriam Kahn's work focuses on the complex spaces that comprise Tahiti. Her texts "Tahiti Intertwined" (Kahn, 2000:7-26), "Invest in Your Love" (Kahn, 2014:114-67), and *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard: Power, Place, and Everyday Life* seek to understand the ways in which Tahiti, as a space, is socially constructed (Kahn, 2011). Her theories about the relationships and coexisting spaces that construct Tahiti as a site of tourism, militarization, colonization, and indigenous resistance are rooted in Henri Lefebvre's assertions that space is constructed by politically-informed relationships between individuals, institutions, and representations (Lefebvre, 1973).

Debra Spitulnik's work concerning the role of mediation in the formation of communities offers insights useful for deconstructing the ways by which the cameras, the videos' contents, and the online infrastructure for disseminating the videos and making them available for consumption mediate Tahiti Nui (Spitulnik, 1996). In other words, I will be drawing from her work to discuss how people interpret and represent Tahiti Nui's mobility infrastructures in the context of the GoPro using and consuming community. I draw from Spitulnik's work to further my discussion of how people interpret and represent colonial mobility infrastructures in Tahiti Nui as seen in the corpus of GoPro videos.

YouTube acts as a means through which people can share videos and for people to develop interests in certain creators and genres of videos, and the algorithm brings together recommendations of other videos similar to those already watched (Covington, et al., 2016). The videos often contain co-text in the form of descriptions, comments, and intertitles that show the

names of the resorts they stay at, the names of islands they go to, and tour operators they may use. This sharing creates a community of interested viewers.

Another point of entry for the assessment of mediated representations is aesthetics. The study of Aesthetics offers a number of insights into the production, sharing, and meanings of videos. Rancière asserts that aesthetics is a means by which humans' senses and understandings of their surroundings are 'organized' (Rancière, 2015:22). Thus, senses are a practice of organizing the world and making it known to the person who senses. If the camera is a sensory apparatus and an aesthetic apparatus, thus it facilitates an understanding of the landscapes of GoPro videos, the landscapes they represent, and the social and physical landscapes that facilitate the travel around and representations of Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia. Rancière and Rockhill's *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2013) and *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics* (2015), articulate with works concerning the ways through which tourists construct their representations and the ways through which they are positioned (Rancière & Rockhill, 2013; Rancière, 2015).

Tussyadiah and Fessenmeier's "Mediating Tourist Experiences: Access to Places via Shared Videos" (2009), and Mike Crang's "Knowing, tourism, and practices of vision" (1999). Crang, Tussyadiah, and Fessenmeier assert that imaging technologies and tourism reflect and deepen power relations through representations (Crang, 1999; Tussyadiah and Fessenmeier, 2009) Tussyadiah's piece specifically discusses the ways by which sharing online videos renders the places depicted in those videos accessible. Their study focuses on the various relational processes represented in YouTube videos of people traveling to and through New York City, a built environment replete with representable and mediating infrastructures. I found resonance between this thesis and Tussyadiah and Fessenmeier's piece, particularly in our shared interests in the ways through which people represent their interactions with infrastructures

imposed in the context of imperialist and colonial expansion. I found Tussyadiyah and Fessenmeier's engagement with the temporality of tourism interesting and useful for future studies of mediated representations.

Mediating Tourism: History of the Representational Canon

Max Quanchi and Max Shekelton describe and offer a visual history of colonial Pacific postcards and the images that they reproduce and disseminate. The authors use the term 'Oceania' as a descriptive shorthand of their geographic focus. Quanchi and Shekelton collaborated, drawing all of their resources from Shekelton's extensive postcard collection. Quanchi and Shekelton begin this text by positing that postcards 'were an armchair journey' (Quanchi and Shekelton, 2015:11) into and around Oceania. Quanchi and Shekelton explain that postcards are distinctly interpersonal media: they add the representational aspects of photography to the personal and transitory aspects of correspondence (Quanchi and Shekelton, 2015). The postcards analyzed and depicted in the text come from all across Oceania, depicting the spread of empire and the attempts to fold colonized peoples and places into the visual canon of imperial histories. Although these authors do not explicitly discuss videos made by tourists and disseminated on YouTube, the YouTube videos must be seen as in articulation and genealogical relationships with these media.

The authors argue that postcards from and depicting the Euro-American empires in the Pacific are subjective and temporally discrete renderings of multivocalic images and symbols (Quanchi and Shekelton, 2015:14). They position the photographer as a record-keeper tied to the perpetuation of empire, as the record-keeper records that which the empire is bringing into view, and following the processes Scott (1998), outlines, attempts to turn legible and suppress

indigenous lifeways and histories. Postcards lived and continue to live double lives as advertisements: not only for products, but for the promotion of imperial incursion and the marginalization of indigenous peoples. Miriam Kahn's *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard* establishes a genealogy linking the images created of Tahiti and the efforts by the French Polynesian government, which still retains deep ties to Metropolitan France, to marginalize Mā'ohi (indigenous people of French Polynesia. This is used by Tahitians as well) agencies and lifeways.

Bernard Smith's article (1950) focuses on European representations of newly encountered Pacific landscapes. The European voyages through the Pacific opened the islands up to European incursion and laid the foundation for an economy of European interpretations of these places, peoples, and histories. Smith reviews scientific and documentary art created by crewmembers on European exploratory voyages in the Pacific. His work is one of the foundational works for media studies of the Pacific. Smith's focus on the production and circulation of these images, which were brought into Europeans' imperially-inclined imaginations through books. In addition to contributing scientific data about the transit of Venus and the geographic features of the South Pacific, the military and scientific institutions seemed to want to establish an economy for European representations of the Pacific. I am reviewing this piece because Smith offers observations into the first Western visual representations of Pacific islands. I paid particular attention to passages concerning European representations of visits with Tahitians and their observations of the landscape. Smith includes illustrations of artwork that circulated European imaginations of Tahiti. Many of these images resonate with those produced and shared in GoPro videos.

Touring Pacific Cultures, an anthology edited by Kalissa Alexeyeff and John Taylor (2016), concerns people's mobilities within the context of tourism in the Pacific. The pieces focus on different Pacific places that share in their experiences of colonialism and intentional development through tourism. The anthology's title gestures towards a desire to address how cultures are made into tour-able (that is, seen and experienced in very specific ways). This anthology contains important pieces about the nature of tourism in Oceania, and the book offers an important comparative look at tourism as it exists in many Pacific places.

I found two of the anthology's chapters useful: the introductory chapter, "Arrivals and departures in *Touring Pacific Cultures*" and "Re-Purposing Paradise: Tourism, Age, and Affect". The introductory chapter situates the following within a focus on mobility, while the latter chapter discusses photography. The introductory chapter's focus on the cycle of arrival and departure can be understood to be a look at the ways through which tourists use the same infrastructures I look for in the videos under study: airports, roads, law enforcement apparatuses, and others (Taylor & Alexeyeff, 2016). The focus on affect is essentially a study of the emotive reactions of photographers and those they photograph (Alexeyeff, 2016).

The arrival and departure moments are moments in which the mobility infrastructures facilitating travel to and through Mā'ohi Nui are introduced both to the filmmakers and to the viewers. In the videos under study, I found that arrivals and departures are documented in order to show the process of travel and to give narrative context to the filmmakers' representations of certain places. For example, Matt (2013), who compiles footage taken by Air Tahiti Nui air crews and ground staff, explicitly demonstrates the transportation worker's facilitations of arrivals and departures—the other side of the infrastructure, if you will.

The representational canon extends past visual arts to include performing arts. Mā'ohi dance and music is incorporated into visual representations of Mā'ohi Nui. Tahitian dance and music are widely accessible to tourists and locals alike. Opportunities abound for performance and spectatorship. Many Mā'ohi and settlers participate in local dance troupes. Dance academies exist abroad as well. While I was in Tahiti, I attended a hura competition featuring troupes from the United States and Japan. Heiva, the most well-known performing arts competition, takes place in July. The Heiva in Tahiti attracts the best dance, instrumental, singing, and sung poetry groups from all over French Polynesia and coincides with widespread festivities. In addition to the competition in Tahiti, members of the Mā'ohi diaspora gather in Honolulu, Montreal (many Mā'ohi students choose to study at the French-speaking universities in Quebec), Los Angeles, and Paris for local heiva. In Japan, Japanese Tahitian dance enthusiasts have organized heiva in three major cities.

Jane Moulin, an ethnomusicologist specializing in Mā'ohi Nui music and dance, describes how Mā'ohi dance and musical traditions are celebrations of Mā'ohi culture and solidarity, and should not be studied with the assumption that contemporary performances are watered-down and degraded facsimiles of 'authentic' performance traditions (Moulin, 2017:268)

Moulin notes that Heiva, which has in recent years become a major tourist draw, is understood to be an educational experience for tourists:

In 2006, the deliberate push for increased tourism touched the Heiva, the pinnacle of performance by Tahitians for Tahitians. The visitor centre opened a special exhibit of historical Heiva posters, with the Minister of Culture proudly pronouncing the welcome marriage of culture and tourism, and Heiva organizers worked to reserve seats for visitors, making tickets readily available in the hotels and setting up shuttles to take tourists to and from performances. Envisioned as a site for encounter and a place to experience Tahitian culture, the Heiva became a very public area for displaying hospitality and allowing visitors to easily touch a part of Tahitian culture by rubbing elbows with the Tahitian community... Importantly, this contact was on a level determined by Tahitian values, not tourist needs. (Moulin 2017:287-8)

Moulin continues her analysis of the mutual construction of Mā'ohi and tourist spaces by discussing the prevalence of smaller, hotel- and resort-based dance and music performances. She discusses the pitfalls of assuming that the sharing of Tahitian knowledge and spaces in Tahiti's tourist hotels operates on a binary between indigenous giver and foreign taker (Moulin, 2017:289-91).

It is important that I articulate with this line of thought, and that I emphasize that this understanding of the mutual construction of and visualization of settler and indigenous spaces. The process Moulin describes is the mutual use of infrastructures that, while facilitating the French invasion and continued presence, allow for this confluence of socially constructed spaces that engenders novel interactions, performances, and documentations.

While Moulin's piece specifically concerns human-centric performance, specifically a kind of connection to indigenous knowledge. Moulin's piece critiques discourses positing indigenous peoples as the passive, less agentic, gazed-upon, while tourists are agentic, mobile, and do the work of gazing by virtue of intersecting privileges. John Urry, one of the foremost tourism scholars, posits that tourists relate to the places they travel to and people they see through the 'gaze' (Urry, 1990). Urry understands the tourist gaze to be an extension of Foucault's conception of the gaze as a relational practice predicated upon the deployment of punitive and classificatory power. While Foucault's works focused on the carceral and the clinical (Foucault, 1975), which also weaponize the classificatory schemes of science to flex oppressive power onto marginalized people, Urry focuses on the ways through which classificatory power as it manifests through the structural realities of colonialism and racism, marginalizes those who live in tourist-frequented locations.

Just as visitors to the mediated landscapes of Tahiti Nui video viewers articulate their relationships to the mediated landscapes by consuming the media and interacting with it. In order to assess the consumption of mediated representations and mediated landscapes, we must ascertain the links between globalizing capitalism, the commodification of people, places, and histories; and the production and consumption of culture. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer discuss the mass production of culture in terms of industry: that is, they class the production of culture in terms of mass production and the articulation of capital with work (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944). Adorno and Horkheimer posit that mass culture, which is understood to be a widely shared and consumed corpus of media.

Adorno and Horkheimer essentially locate the genesis of mass culture in American capitalist hegemony (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944), discussing how culture is produced in ways that encourage standardization of entertainment to appeal to mass audiences. For context, the two authors wrote the text while fleeing persecution in Nazi Germany; their fixation on political hegemony and the politics of media is based on their experiences, namely their fears of the power of mass-produced and mass-consumed media orienting the consumers towards certain political goals. Their contemporary, Walter Benjamin, did not survive Nazi persecution.

Walter Benjamin studies the existence of art in the context of mechanization and industrialization. Benjamin's seminal text "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin, 1936) situates the critical assessment of mass industry and mass cultural production in a criticism of the articulation of capitalism and political hegemony. Benjamin looks into the concept of authenticity: specifically how mechanical and mass reproduction of art can call the work's authenticity into question. These two works articulate understandings about how relationships to the means of cultural and material production and

how consumption of these produced cultural artefacts, namely works of art, shapes the ways in which the art is understood.

GoPro cameras are marketed as tools for documenting adventures, but their use has expanded beyond those who would identify themselves as action sports participants. These cameras are built to withstand conditions that are inimical to the operation of many consumer-grade cameras. The company that would become GoPro, Inc. was founded in 2002, years before the advent contemporary high-quality smartphone cameras. The company's founder, a surfing enthusiast named Nick Woodman, became aware of a lack of high-quality camera technology that was accessible to consumers. After lashing a series of doomed cameras to his wrists, he and his trusted associates developed a 35-millimeter film-using, wrist-mounted camera (Mac, 2013.). The company would become a lifestyle juggernaut and would give rise to a series of digital cameras, camera accessories, and software.

The term 'lifestyle' is a signifier of the quotidian. It gives a life-ness to products or commercial enterprises that extends past the product's own material realities and ontology. Essentially, lifestyle brands are brands that are marketed as means through which consumers can express themselves (Chernev, et al., 2011:66-7). Lifestyle brands articulate with human and non-human agencies and the politicized distribution of resources. The authors state that the pivot towards lifestyle marketing is a reaction to the 'saturation' of brands and facilitates 'a way of breaking free of the cutthroat competition within a category by connecting with consumers on a more personal level,' (Chernev et al., 2011:79).

The competition niche is a means through which the GoPro, Inc. incentivizes participation in certain ways of relating to landscapes and the use of certain aesthetic

vocabularies. The circulation of these exciting videos, which purposefully demarcate the ordinary from the extraordinary, acts as marketing for the GoPro camera and its accessories.

The access to image-making and sharing technologies was greatly limited to those lacking technical knowledge needed to operate the cameras and the funds to acquire them, to maintain them, and to participate in and document the activities for which the cameras were designed. I will discuss more granular technical aspects of the camera in chapter four, which focuses on technopolitical aspects of human-environment relations and the transformative powers of infrastructures. GoPro cameras and their associated equipment have been, and continue to be, still expensive. However, their relatively low prices render them somewhat accessible to those with means.

At the time, unless you were a pro surfer, there was no one out in the water to capture a photo of you. That's how I came up with the name GoPro. Most surfers, at some point, wish they could "go pro." My friends and I wanted to go pro just so we could get some footage of surfing; it was that difficult. So I figured at least a few surfers would be down with the concept of a wearable camera. Thankfully. I was half right. (Berra, 2010)

It is apparent in this portion of this interview that Woodman wishes for hobbyists and tourist-filmmakers to partake in the aesthetic vocabularies and technical specifications of professional films and sports documentation. GoPro Inc.'s current marketing slogan is 'Be a Hero', and its flagship series of cameras is the Hero series. By calling the cameras 'Hero's, GoPro is linking the camera to the practice of extraordinary action in extraordinary circumstances. In contexts of white settler dominance, heroism is situated at a juncture between gendered embodiment, adventure, athleticism, and competence. In a sense, the company is selling an aspirational mobility to its targeted audience through a multitude of products and services. The GoPro company has expanded its corporate presence: it acquired video editing

software, set up multiple YouTube channels and corporate partnerships, and even began its own content creator sponsorship programs for both professional athletes and amateur content creators.

He states that the camera fills a need for portable, rugged, and high-quality camera technology at a price accessible to hobbyists and aspiring professionals alike. Woodman developed a film camera at first and then anchored the company's reputation with the development and sale of rugged, hyper-portable digital cameras. Then, the company diversified its operations by creating YouTube videos to share extraordinary content and footage of company-sponsored athletes. The company even sponsors its own video competition, with the winners receiving cash prizes.

By understanding how the company incentivizes certain uses of its cameras to document spectacular activities and places, the nature of the camera's mediation of documented people and places can be understood. The GoPro official YouTube channel even draws from the 'best' or most appealing videos for themed compilations and 'best of' videos. It will be interesting to see how people tend to classify the videos they create and view as educational, entertainment, or a combination of both. The inclusion of YouTube videos in educational programs, business practices, or other 'serious' endeavors gestures towards an interpretation of the social networking site as an important vessel of information and epistemologies.

These experiences are facilitated by attaching the camera to a drone to capture aerial footage, immersing the camera in the water to observe marine landscapes and marine life, using the camera to depict and disclose relationships both to locals and to other tourists, and through editing and eventual dissemination through social media. I used discourse analysis and formal analysis to assess and analyze the videos' content and subtexts. A full list of videos is listed in the appendices and in the bibliography. I will draw upon a multitude of resources: company texts

and films, news reports, and even user reviews. The large corpus of media created through the use of the GoPro camera exists in a specific discursive process between the camera's users and the people and places they document.

One way this discursive process is made apparent is through the act of documenting. Content creators making videos with the GoPro camera often affix the camera to their bodies or to extensions of their bodies. GoPro, Inc. and other companies sell accessories that facilitate this attachment: namely harnesses, selfie sticks or monopods, and attachments to sports equipment. By attaching the camera to their body or to equipment that acts as extensions of the body that allow the content creator to participate in certain activities, the content creators can create media that facilitates representations of embodied perspectives.

The videos include first-person perspectives and third-person perspectives. The GoPro camera is a high-definition camera equipped with a wide-angle lens: its purpose is to capture and render clear images with a wide field of vision. The camera's small size and lightness allows it to move with relative ease, allowing for a variety of shots and perspective changes. For instance, a content creator filming themselves snorkeling with a selfie stick may begin a shot with the camera facing the direction of travel and then change it to face themselves, as if they were taking a selfie. The perspectives are tools through which viewers understand how the content creator relates to the places and people they document. Videos containing footage taken on GoPro cameras may use a variety of compositional styles and may even switch between videos and still images.

GoPro, Inc. incentivizes the use of its products by demonstrating how the products' users can create appealing representations. The creation of these representations is a deployment of gazes--gazes that are invariably raced, classed, and gendered. The gaze's raced-, classed-, and

gendered-ness is understood to be the ways by which the gazer perceives and represents the world through intersecting identities, which position the gazer differently to peoples, places, and histories they encounter.

It is no surprise then that the representational canon of Tahiti Nui as articulated by Smith and Kahn echoes through these content creators' works. Following the common threads of Kahn's works, I posit that tourism must be understood as a powerful node through which human-environment relations are enacted and represented. Tourism that is predicated upon tourists' access to natural environments is called ecotourism. Ecotourism is understood to be a solution to the problems faced by exploited communities and ecosystems: the solution is to preserve the environment and sometimes preserve the people living there, a process that discursively links the people and that environment. Ecotourism is folded into sustainability discourses, which in white settler dominant contexts are punctuated with personal responsibility discourses and is woven into aspirational relations to the environment and to social capital. Robert Fletcher's (2014) *Romancing the Wild* discusses how ecotourism is inextricably linked to colonialism and adventure, which are predicated upon colonial imaginaries of the built and natural landscapes and the people indigenous to those places. Fletcher explores the idea of adventure as a means to egress from the alienating realities of life during the contemporary political and economic moment.

Conclusions

Following this line of thought, tourism is thus a means of egress from the ordinary. However, this egress often benefits from systems that further marginalize those who inhabit toured places and the places themselves. The marginalization manifests from inconvenience to

outright violence. Further following this and Mary Louise Pratt's (2007) discussion of the ways through which Europeans constructed Africa and Africans through travel journals, I will situate these videos within the tension between humans and the environment as mediated by infrastructure and through representations.

The infrastructures tourists use and represent exist to facilitate the circulation of goods, services, ideas, and living and non-living beings. To travel to and through the built and natural landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui, tourists must use that infrastructure. By using that infrastructure, tourists encounter the ways through which colonial governance has attempted to make the natural and Mā'ohi-built landscapes legible to French and French Polynesian governance. Following Scott's analysis of the ways through which governments render landscapes and peoples legible, I posit that the representations of these meditations on YouTube is a continuation of this legibility process--albeit, the viewers participate in a mass consumption of these mediated landscapes (Scott, 1998).

The tourists' gazes upon the human-nature relations, which are formulated by and formulate representations, are mediated by the use of infrastructures. Infrastructures that facilitated the spread of French hegemony continue to facilitate the movement of capital, people, and ideas. However, these infrastructures are also sites of resistance and agentive actions. I have found that tourists' use of infrastructures in and around capital cities and representations of those uses reflects tourists' ideas about race and mobility, which are in turn incentivized by tourism industries.

Mediation is the process by which things are represented: that is, they may be reconfigured for consumption by a body of viewers or consumers. Mediation is a sort of transformation, but I use the term 'transformation' in order to more accurately portray the fundamental task of

infrastructure: to render the landscape amenable to the efficient and effective transfer of people, capital, and ideas. By filming and sharing their experiences with relating to the constructed environments of Tahiti Nui, tourists reflect what they understand about the ways infrastructures relate cities to the surrounding environments. They see cities as centers of economic growth and the seeds of infrastructural spread across the islands, and generally act as advertisers who work for free. Their racialized gazes mediate their experiences of these cities, which were the centers of colonial power as it existed outside of the metropole.

The GoPro allows for the embodied experience of specific human-environment relations through the fixation of the camera to the body or to equipment that allows for participation in various extraordinary activities that comprise tourism. People create and share videos because they want to share a message or an experience. They have access to something compelling. In Mā'ohi Nui, that compelling thing is an environment that is, more often than not, inaccessible to many of those who film with GoPro cameras in Mā'ohi Nui. The multitude of gestures, activities, and the clarity of images and sound captured by the camera allow content creators to share the means through they have access to the built and natural landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui.

Chapter III: Consuming Transformed Islands, Mediating Consumed Islands

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe mediated interactions with mobility infrastructures as represented in different types of videos taken on GoPro cameras and posted to YouTube. Before I jump headlong into my discussion of infrastructures, I would like to assert that I do not view the individual GoPro cameras as infrastructures. I understand them to be means through which physical and digital infrastructures may be represented. For example, cars are not infrastructures – they just make use of them. GoPro cameras are used while people use mobility infrastructures to access the places that they want to film. Just as Katerina Teaiwa studies the documentation of labor and infrastructure that connected phosphate, and images of Banaba and Banabans between Banaba and the rest of the world, I study the documentation of interactions between people and mobility infrastructures in Tahiti Nui. However, I study how a specific camera, situated within a distinct cultural and economic context, allows for the production of mediated representations of people's interactions with mobility infrastructures. These interactions themselves are ways through which humans and the environment relate: infrastructures, I argue, mediate the natural and built landscapes that comprise Tahiti Nui.

Teaiwa's work dovetails with those of Bowker (2010), Star and Ruhleder (1996), Carse (2014), and Kahn (2000, 2011, 2014). Both Teaiwa and Kahn describe the ways through which power is inscribed onto landscapes and also serve as means to represent the power colonizers exert over indigenous people and landscapes. While Teaiwa focuses on the These authors elucidate the manners through which infrastructures not only impact people, non-human beings, and landscapes by articulating how these infrastructures give rise to and disseminate information. Because the technopolitical lives of infrastructures are so dependent on their material and

cultural contexts, infrastructures must be studied in both material and cultural terms. In future studies, I will discuss the GoPro's materiality and infrastructural materialities in more granular detail. In the interest of space and time, I will not dive too deeply into a neomaterialist analysis – this analysis will provide ample material for future publications concerning the political ecologies of mobility infrastructures and of the corpus of representations accessible through YouTube and cameras like the GoPro.

Following my previous discussions of the relationships between the representation and what is being represented, I argue that discussing images created using a GoPro camera contain more information than what is apparent at a first glance. The power enacted in these mediated representations articulates with the power deployed through the creation, maintenance, and use of infrastructures that further both French colonial presence and Mā'ohi resistances.

In this chapter, I will analyze the ways through which people represent how they relate to the environment. I begin by offering context to the GoPro cameras and the GoPros' presence online. The images that the GoPro camera, the camera's users, and GoPro, Inc. produce, consume, and disseminate offer means through which people relate to the environment and represent those relations.

I use the typology to clearly and systematically elucidate the ways by which people interact with mobility infrastructures and represent those interactions through the use of a GoPro camera. The typology offers a framework with which spatial relations between the camera and its user, filmed people and the filmmaker, and the environment and the filmmaker may be analyzed.

As I have previously mentioned, I used two methods to analyze the data: in order to understand how videos are presented to viewers, I employed both a random selection of videos

and a non-random selection. I use these two selection methods to ascertain the differences in the characteristics of videos randomly selected and selected in a way that may be more common among casual viewers. The random selection process is associated with the scientific method; randomness has connotations of objectivity associated with Western scientific epistemologies. I chose to use this method because I wanted to see if I could minimize the effect of the algorithm on my search results. I selected the videos from a spreadsheet I compiled from the results of entering the listed search terms.

I attempted to balance the corpus, selecting videos that both a representation of most other videos filmed with GoPros and others I deemed interesting or anomalous. I determined whether or not a GoPro camera was used by looking into the video title, description, comments, narration, intertitles, or credits. Usually the camera name was explicitly listed. This listing enables viewers and other content creators to emulate the filming and editing techniques they see. By enumerating the equipment used to document their travels, the places they travel to, and their reason for traveling, content creators make their work available for indexing and searching. The process of indexing associates certain words with certain represented processes, thus creating a vocabulary through which places and peoples are constructed and represented.

Alexandra Georgakopoulou's "Sharing as rescripting: Place manipulations on YouTube between narrative and social media affordances" (2015) describes the tensions between stories predicated upon place and stories predicated upon specific structurings of temporality. Georgakopoulou's article concerns the ways by which places are represented on YouTube and the effects of those representations of and experiences of places. To clarify, she describes the transformation from emphasis from manipulations of time and of representations of time to representations of place as the impetus for narrative progression. "In the study of everyday life

storytelling, the shift of focus to place as a narrative resource has come after a traditional privileging of time and temporality as an organizing principle of a story's plot" (Georgakopoulou 2015:64). I was interested in this article because of the ambiguity of time inherent to certain YouTube travel videos and the centralities of representations of place. I say 'ambiguity' because I understand the need to compress or alter temporalities to create a pleasant or informative visual experience for viewers.

Recall my discussion of Tussyadiah and Fessenmaier's (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009) piece "Mediating Tourist Experiences". Their study design informed my own, and I found it helpful to read their work before embarking on my own. Tussyadiah and Fessenmaier describe the process through which people's gestures indicates the ways through which they relate to the environments in which they find themselves. I build off their work for my thesis by describing interactions with mobility infrastructures and using a typology to understand how the activities and relationships motivating traveling and documentation reveal information about colonial mobility infrastructures.

I have described the visual and narrative elements of each exemplary video. At the beginning of each chapter, I will feature the able, which will aid the reader in understanding the categories of shots, activities, and infrastructures presented in each video. The relationship and activity binaries are useful for understanding what narrative thrust exists in each video and offers a glimpse into how the filmmakers might understand the infrastructures with which they interact. The activities that the filmmakers partake in demonstrates how they understand the purpose of their trip, the built and natural landscapes through which they travel, how they relate to the human and non-human beings entangled with each other, the landscapes, and the infrastructures connecting them to other places, and the infrastructures that mediates their access to and

experiences of those landscapes through the infrastructure's work of transformation. The relationships between the filmmakers and the party with which they travel may provide an insight into what the purpose of their trip is – specifically, how they relate to the places and people of Mā'ohi Nui in terms of travel transactions, novel experiences, or as a series of genealogical connections.

These binaries and the prevalence of mixed activity orientations and relationship dynamics offer an interesting and fruitful corpus of context through which to understand how people interact with mobility infrastructures and represent those interactions online. While offering a means through which specific commonalities may be analyzed. Videos of all types make use of certain technological commonalities, namely filming techniques, editing techniques. Among the common filming techniques include the use of different perspectives.

Action-oriented videos and activities are widely represented in the search results, given that the GoPro camera was originally made to document participation in action activities. As I have previously said, its construction and advertising incentivize the camera's use in environments that are normally inimical to the operation of standard cameras. These videos center activities such as surfing and bodyboarding, skydiving, SCUBA diving, snorkeling, off-road or 4-wheel driving, and other physically and equipment-intensive activities. Videos of this genre are the ones most often chosen for GoPro awards.

Non-action-intensive videos document more relaxed activities, such as relaxing on beaches, driving around on paved roads, eating, watching dance and cultural shows, visits to historically and culturally relevant sites such as important sites of contact between settlers and Mā'ohi people such as Point Venus, cathedrals and churches, government buildings, memorials, and the houses and graves of famous Euro-American artists and writers in Mā'ohi Nui. Content

of this type can also demonstrate the creator's efforts to acquire one or more of Mā'ohi Nui's languages, learn about indigenous lifeways, demonstrate their participation in or appreciation of activities such as dance, handicraft making, or ceremonies; or demonstrate their knowledge and appreciation of Tahiti Nui and Mā'ohi Nui's representational canon. These videos often aim to educate viewers or appeal to people with similar interests to the filmmaker, offering a contribution to an intellectual community or even a fandom.

Romantic dynamic-oriented videos document a very particular set of spatio-temporal moments in the filmmaker's relationship or relationships. The focal point of these videos is romantic relationships, particularly honeymoons or anniversary celebrations. There seems to be a particular fixation on public displays of affection, shared activities, and the establishing of a romantic narrative centered upon the beginning of a new phase of a partnered relationship in the context of vacation. The couple enjoys various activities together, and viewers are invited to celebrate the couple's relationship.

Non-romantic-dynamic oriented videos add nuance to the larger subcategory of videos documenting the interpersonal dynamics of the filmmakers. This type of video offers a parallel to the discussion of romance-oriented tourism, which is often anchored in the economic and cultural hegemony of heterosexual and cisgender love and romance. It thus behooves me to discuss heterosexual and cisgender romance's cultural and economic corollary: the nuclear family. The discussion of platonic relationships also it would seem that a return, with children in tow, could be in the future of amorous couples. The friendship is on display through friendly gestures and contact between participants, documenting outings, and documenting shared activities.

The typology accommodates the existence of videos that mix two or more types. The typology is not rigid because people have different motivations for documenting; omitting mixed-type videos obviates narrative and technical nuances that gesture towards important information about how people represent their interactions with the places they visit and the activities with which they partake. I determined the degree of type dominance by assessing the central motivation for documenting the video. That is to say, I assign type classifications to each video according to the foundational aspects of a video's narrative.

Video Commonalities

The typology is useful for categorizing common narratives. I argue that the videos have more in common with each other than differences between them. There are a multitude of reasons for this: Kahn argues that people who take videos or still images often imitate images they see in mediated representations of Tahiti Nui, particularly in the contemporary moment. Kahn's metaphor for tourist spaces is the cocoon, a term that carries connotations of transformation, 'opacity', and containment (Kahn 2011:129). Let us also remember that cocoons are places and things in which intermediacy is experienced. By using the metaphor of the cocoon, Kahn ties the mediation of places and infrastructures to temporality, to a condition of betweenness. Thus, the images produced are not only evocative of a destination but of the intermediate stage between viewing a place from a distance and viewing it in person.

Along with increasing use of the Internet for promoting a destination comes the democratization provided by the Internet through the postvacation [sic] distribution of photos on blogs and Flickr [a photo sharing website], and videos on YouTube. Not surprisingly -- because the majority of tourists to Tahiti stay in the tourist 'cocoon' - the personal images and narratives they post tend to replicate marketing imagery and validate their experiences. These include 'postcard' visions of blue lagoons and empty beaches, the isolated beach chairs under coconut palms, honeymoon couples dining on private

verandas, rainbows above overwater bungalows, and fiery tropical sunsets. (Kahn 2011:125)

Kahn thus links the mediated representations of places, the act of representation, and the people who move through those spaces with the act of dissemination, as if dissemination is a means through which the content creators may map themselves onto the landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui. Following Sontag's assertion that statement that photography is the process of the photographer appropriating that which is photographed (Sontag 1973:loc 31), I would like to extend that argument to the viewer. The appropriation extends through the photographer, which through disseminating the photographs or videos, extends it to the viewer.

There are a multitude of common elements between each type and each video. There are very few videos that exclusively contain elements for one subtype. That is to say, some videos have more diverse theming than others and the videos' titles or co-texts offer insights into the video's narrative thrust(s).

I included the term 'GoPro' in each search because I am only interested in videos that are filmed through the use of GoPro cameras. I excluded videos not filmed on GoPros for at least part of the video. I describe two types of camera orientation relative to the filmmaker: a selfie shot and an outward-facing shot. A selfie is a common term for when one purposefully takes a picture of themselves. These types of shots can be accomplished by orienting the camera lens towards oneself and holding it by hand, through the means of a selfie stick or tripod, or positioned on a surface and fired through the use of a timer. Selfie shots purposefully inscribe the filmmaker's presence onto the landscape, documenting the deliberate self-situation in one's surroundings. Outward-facing shots can be taken in any direction so long as the face of the person using the camera is not visible. The outward-facing shots can often reproduce first-person perspectives and contribute to the illusion that video viewers are immersed in the places or

activities depicted. (These shots have often made me motion sick. I regretfully neglected to anticipate this danger to my person in any IRB paperwork.)

The camera may be static or dynamic. Static cameras tend to stay in one place: that is, the world moves around it or the person using the camera tends to stay still or move slowly.

Dynamic camera motions include panning, rapid tracking, or even falling. Also, there may be primarily natural or built landscapes depicted, and there might be a musical score or voiceover, something that Nick Paumgarten calls a ‘one-sided conversation’ (Paumgarten, 2014), implying that the viewer will not respond to the utterances or the utterances will be so delayed that the conversation is not feasible.

After watching the videos under study, I came to realize that there were two types of interpersonal relationship dynamics going on between the filmmakers and two different types of activity groupings. The relationship dynamics are divided between romance-oriented (including honeymoons) and non-romance-oriented. The activity groupings are action-intensive and non-action intensive. Since the GoPro camera is useful for documenting action-intensive activities, it is no surprise that action-intensive activities were among the most widely represented activities.

Paumgarten elaborates on the ways through which the GoPro’s specifications can be difficult to navigate or irritating for users. I will elaborate further on these matters in my section on agencies, but I thought it would be important to discuss what the cameras cannot do.

The GoPro is defined as much by its limitations as by its advantages. It has no display, so you can’t see what’s in the frame [note: a screen was introduced in later models, progressing to a touch screen. In a way, this doesn’t matter, because the wide-angle lens takes in so broad a field (everything in focus, everything lit) that you need only point it in a general direction and you can expect to capture something good... In unedited GoPro shots, the cameraman often appears in closeup in the frame, amid the muffled clatter of finger (or glove) brushing microphone; this routine parenthesis is the GoPro version of a director’s slate. (Paumgarten, 2014)

The GoPro proprietary editing software even has royalty-free music filmmakers can use to set a nice ambiance and cover up these so-called ‘one-sided conversations’ or utterances between the filmmakers and those they film. In addition to this, there are advertising graphics one can use as well. The current software is called Quik. Some of the newer models of GoPro can import altitude and speed data into the video footage (GoPro, n.d.), a feature that renders these high-resolution, portable, and rugged cameras increasingly like scientific instruments.

Jacques Rancière describes aesthetics in terms of distribution, a term that has connotations of infrastructure.

A distribution of the sensible therefor establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and portions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution. (Rancière 2013:12)

Rancière goes on to say that these ‘individuals’ have a hand in governance, as the regulation and management of distributions is an act of governance. If aesthetics is a means through which individuals can participate in a form of governance through the distribution of and incentivization of specific representations of mobility infrastructures, then it follows that aesthetics requires a sort of infrastructure. Perhaps, then, aesthetics is the infrastructure. For the purposes of this thesis, I understand the aesthetics of the videos to be the inventory of shots, compositions, the sound accompanying the images, and that which is depicted.

Statistical Attributes

Before I begin my video analysis in earnest, I find it necessary to share some statistics about the larger corpus of GoPro videos taken in Mā’ohi Nui and shared to YouTube. The

following table will offer statistical information pertaining to search results for each given search term. The table will contain average lengths, average views, the number of results for each term, and the date range for the first 25 results. At the time of this writing (February 2019), YouTube no longer provides statistics for search terms, meaning that all of the data must be manually collected. Despite this, there are thousands of listed (searchable) videos containing relevant content. No filters will be applied to the results.

Table One: Video Statistical Summaries

	Avg. Lengths	Avg. Views	Number of Results	Date Range
French Polynesia Tahiti GoPro	7.81 Minutes	~271,000	>1,000	July 27, 2018 -Jun 24, 2018
French Polynesia Tahiti GoPro Trip	5.91 Minutes	~111,800	>1,000	Dec 21, 2014 -Dec 17, 2018
Polynésie Française Tahiti Voyage GoPro	8.23 Minutes	~125,000	>1,000	Jun 22, 2012- Jan 13, 2019
Tahiti GoPro	6.78 Minutes	~204,000	>1,000	Mar 2, 2012 - Dec 19, 2018

The average view figures are skewed by the fact that there are a few videos with millions or hundreds of thousands of views. Most of the views range between a few hundred and a few thousand views. The search algorithm brings forth videos that appeal to wide audiences. The date range is wide but is placed squarely in the early 2010s, a time when the user base for YouTube and the videos it hosts expanded substantially. Due to YouTube's introduction of an infinite

scroll feature, the sheer bunk of the video corpus can only be estimated, but I would guess that there are tens of thousands of videos uploaded.

Findings

Before I describe the corpus of videos under study, I would like to connect the theoretical frameworks through which I view the videos to the events that take place in the videos. Recall my assertion that mobility infrastructures are means by which the landscapes (both built and natural) are mediated. That is to say, these infrastructures, in these cases mobility infrastructures, are making these landscapes accessible to people in a way that is efficient and effective.

In the work of accessibility and the conditions of efficiency and efficacy are contingent upon the infrastructures' structural integrity and maintenance. In other words, the infrastructure not only depends on the integrity and durability of its initial construction, but also interactions between the human and non-beings using (or otherwise interacting with) the infrastructure (Barry 2016; Bennett 2010). Representing those infrastructures through the use of a camera and then posting them online is another type of interaction that works to shape how people who have never been to the places depicted understand the places to be.

Driving around the island (oftentimes, the interiors of mountainous islands such as Tahiti and Mo'orea have few inward-going roads that are accessible to tourists) is a way for tourists to get a sense of the island's scenery and the distribution of urban and natural landscapes. Driving along the road signals that it is usable; signals that it does its job of rendering the built and natural landscapes accessible to beings, goods, ideas, and capital. Driving the paved road around the island allows the travelers to visit multiple sites in one day, quickly travel from one part of

the island to another, and efficiently navigate the built and natural landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui in a self-contained unit.

The ferry service between Tahiti and Mo'orea leaves from Pape'ete, the capital city, and docks near 'Āfareaitu, Mo'orea. The ferry carries vacationers from Tahiti and abroad, commuters, goods, and Mo'orea inhabitants. The ferries are large, new, and go quite fast. The ferry ride is beautiful and allows passengers to see large tracts of both Tahiti and Mo'orea without even stepping foot on land. These infrastructures facilitate the labor that goes into governance, development, and tourism while allowing tourists to move across land and seascapes.

Typology and Content Analysis

Action-Intensive

TAHITI ET MOOREA GOPRO HERO 5 1080P HD

By Robert Sanchez

The video begins with a first-person perspective pan across the resort grounds to the beach, a practice that explicitly ties the resort to the beach. They then focus on some waterfalls, eventually approaching it from the road. Another waterfall becomes visible from the road, and another access road leads the filmmakers to it. They then go to the Isthmus of Taravao, passing by churches, government buildings, and stores as they drive along the coast. Then, they film their ride on the Mo'orea ferry. They take a shot of the Gare Maritime (ferry terminal) while on the ferry to Mo'orea, then filming the ferry landing at Mo'orea. They shoot the view from viewpoint above the Sofitel Mo'orea and across the strait to Tahiti.

They then go snorkeling, moving through schools of colorful reef fish. After that, there is lots of driving around Mo'orea. In one shot, the filmmakers can be seen panning back and forth to lagoon and to the mountains. They walk through the hotel grounds, focusing on the landscaping and architecture. Then, they cut to a view from the top of a mountain. They then ride on a motorized outrigger canoe, looking towards the mountainous interior then to the lagoon. Then, they cut back to a shot of some reef fish. There is an anchored rope underwater that seeks to guide snorkelers through the water.

Figure Two: the rope is visible to the right.



This video was the first one that sparked my awareness of and interest in the underwater ropes. The ropes, though differing in purpose and function than the other mobility infrastructures I discuss, offer insights into how the underwater natural landscapes (seascapes?) are organized and meant to be understood. As pointed out in my introductory anecdote, coral reefs are sensitive to human incursion and have already suffered tremendous, tragic effects as a result of that incursion. The ropes are meant to show a path through the reef that, presumably, exposes the corals to the least amount of danger while allowing snorkelers to see the marine life.

These ropes are an insight into the reef's spatial organization and the ways through which the mediation of spaces is the result of interactions between and converging agencies of different beings. This is just a small example of infrastructure, as it facilitates movement and exchange (in the form of feedings, bacteria, and on a larger scale, money and images), but it shapes how people experience the coral reefs off the shores of Mo'orea.

At 7:08, the snorkelers can be seen pulling themselves along a rope in order to follow a path through the coral reef. Someone grabs the front of a stingray and rides it, a sick pantomime of a kickboard. The snorkelers watch and film, apparently unfazed. There is a profusion of fish, including but not limited to moray eel, stingrays, and colorful reef fish that gather amongst the humans. The filmmaker films another GoPro, this one affixed to a selfie stick. At that moment, the fact that the first-person perspective is made possible through the use of a camera and not through inhabiting the body experiencing the activity is made apparent. It shows as well how prevalent this documenting practice is.

Again, a group watches someone hold onto a stingray as it pulls him. Then, the filmmaker cuts to a shot of a Moray eel below him as it eats a fish. Hands are visible in the shot. Lots of fish gather around the filmmaker as if feeding. From the land, stingrays can be seen in the water, relaxing near the rocky shoreline. Back in the water, the footage is slowed down: a school of fish and even small giant clams are visible. The filmmaker peers into little fish caverns. Back at the hotel, the filmmaker pays attention to the grounds organization, panning across from the dock to the water. The filmmaker then cuts a shot from more of their snorkeling adventures. A small shark appears. Then, they watch a dance show, including fire dancing and Tahitian dancing. They pan across a valley, and then film their arrival into Pape'ete on the ferry, looking

at cruise ships and central Pape'ete. They looki at caves, a beach, and then a swamp. The video ends.

Gopro Tahiti Surf & Skate

By MrDROLLET

Drollet's video opens with a "GoPro: Be a Hero" stock image. Stock images like these are proprietary to GoPro editing software, though if someone lacks the software, they could insert a screenshot of the stock image into the final video to simulate the use of the editing software. Matahi Drollet, a young Tahitian surfer and skateboarder, films his surfing and skating expeditions on Tahiti. The opening text for his video, stating that the video is 'Filmed in Tahiti', explicitly places him in Tahiti. Surfing is filmed from the beach. GoPro static while he performs skate tricks. He uses a selfie stick and on-board mount, while using an on-board mount for surfing. The camera remains static for capturing flips, jumps, and road tricks. The skating takes places in Pape'ete, at both a skate park and on a parking lot at a Mormon temple. The surfing segments take place at Teahupo'o, where many surfers and jet ski operators can be seen. The ending GoPro-branded image says, "You in HD", indicating marketing oriented towards camera owners' self-expression.

Figure Three: Drollet's skateboard tricks at the LDS church.



The above image captures Drollet's skate tricks in the parking lot of an LDS church. The camera is stationary, placed on the ground to capture Drollet's passing. Drollet is a youthful Tahitian surfer and skater interested in sharing his talents with wider audiences. The presence of and use of roads in this video allow us to understand how Drollet accesses the places where he surfs and skates. The cameras are positioned on the asphalt surface or on ramps designed for skate tricks. Many of his videos appear to take place on the parking lot and basketball court present at LDS churches around Tahiti.

Drollet makes it quite apparent that infrastructure is instrumental to the creation of his video. It feels almost like the viewer is watching his demo reel. Drollet films himself skateboarding on a bridge, using parking lots and dedicated skate parks to film, and by traveling around Tahiti to film. Drollet is a local kid, presumably having grown up on Tahiti and being familiar with the best places to skate and surf. This video has more similarities to than differences with other skating and surfing videos, particularly those that contain no reference to hotels, resorts, or the ways through which they move do and through Mā'ohi Nui.

Drollet has appeared in other surfing-related media and even a video on the GoPro channel! (GoPro, 2015). This particular video is an anomaly: it is a virtual reality-compatible

video. Six GoPro videos, arranged in a sphere to capture all possible angles, were used to film Drollet and Anthony Walsh, another professional surfer. This video expands upon the potential for viewers' embodied experiences of action activities. In this way,

"Garrett McNamara" "Teahupoo" "Tahiti" 3 angles, "GoPro" survives

By Garrett McNamara

Garrett McNamara, a world-famous surfer, films himself surfing at Teahupo'o. The title has, conveniently for us, described the narrative and the filming process. The opening text clearly situates McNamara in a specific spatiotemporal context: a certain date, a certain place, filming with a certain camera that allows him to represent that place the way he wants to. McNamara has films with three GoPros: one on the tip of the surfboard and two on his helmet. The two on his helmet face forward and backward, allowing for front-facing and backwards views in order to capture a multitude of angles through which to view the waves.

After the opening text, McNamara is towed into the break past other jet skis and other surfers. 30 seconds in, he lets go of the rope and the barrel closes over him. At 0:42, he wipes out. Churning white seafoam floods the image -- a glimpse into the sheer weight and power of the towering wave. At 1:18, McNamara resurfaces, the surface of the water scintillating and hissing with the dissipating foam. In the distance, the wave towers, curls in on itself, and breaks. The break races towards McNamara, who dives beneath the surface. At 1:28, he cuts to a backward-facing view taken from the backward-facing camera. He swims, dives briefly, and the image fades to black.

Figure Four: McNamara gets barreled, shortly before the barrel closes over him.



By explicitly detailing the video's narrative, McNamara subtly links the camera's survival of the wipeout with the material realities of the camera. These wipeout videos are a subgenre of surfing videos. Wipeout videos are the surfing video corpus's version of 'fail' videos, or videos that document a failed attempt to perform an activity, usually resulting in dramatic, humorous, or even violent consequences. Fail videos are often understood to be comedic, owing to their cathartic and potentially viral content. [Urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com) (a website dedicated to compiling definitions of argot words and phrases) user `null_device` (2009) couches the content of fail videos in the following terms: 'A fail video is a video documenting an act of failure, often involving unexpected humiliation, embarrassment, pain, or self-ownage. Entertaining fail videos sometimes become viral videos or memes.' (`null_device`, 2009).

The key term is unexpected. The failure to complete a certain action, whether the action is within the scope of one's abilities (as is McNamara's ability to surf Teahupo'o), not in the scope of one's abilities, or the result of circumstances beyond one's control, the participant's unexpected misfortune is the source of the humor and the video's virality. The viewers, however, expect the outcome to be one of failure, creating a temporal relationship between the represented

and the viewer based upon the tension between the anticipation of potential success and the knowledge of imminent failure.

Fail videos offer a glimmer of relatability to those whose extraordinary talents attract viewers: by failing, documenting it, and sharing it, a creator like Garrett McNamara is rendered more-or-less relatable to his audience. In addition to acquiring this relatability, the failure to relate to the environment in a way that results in the completion of the attempted activity says something about both the environment and those that try to relate to it. Wipeout videos especially give the viewers pause; the indifference to nature to human survival, a low hum in the background of those who are privileged enough to have shelter and control over how they experience climate and weather events, the characteristics of the terrain, and consume natural resources, is made especially apparent here. No amount of infrastructure can protect someone from the weight and velocity of a breaking wave. Ironically, the presence of infrastructure that allows the movement of foreign and local surfers to Teahupo'o has endangered the surfers whose lack of skill or lack of luck have killed or seriously injured them.

Exploring TAHITI Treasures – VLOG

By Amir Zakeri

This video is a vlog of the action activities genre with familial and platonic elements. A vlog is a regularly-updated narrative of short, personal stories. Vloggers generally address the camera directly when they make videos, extending their engagement to the audience. The vlogger, who narrates the events and compiles the footage, opens by informing the viewers of the purpose of his travel. After filming himself packing, traveling through the Honolulu and Tahiti airports, he meets with a local man and they eat together. The next morning, he cuts to footage of

his ferry ride to Mo'orea, his ride in a small motorboat. The vlogger remarks, "This is Uber, tropics edition. He picks you up on his boat, at your house." The passengers look for whales and drive off into the sunset. They find sharks and stingrays at a mooring point, presumably a mooring point for snorkeling or swimming. The group of young people hikes to a waterfall, where they slide down natural waterslides.

The vlogger remarks that many people use boats to get around, and it is easy to dock or moor them. Then, he heads to the Sofitel Mo'orea, a resort on the island's northeastern shore. The following sequences take place at the resort. He walks around the bridges connecting the overwater bungalows, noticing how seabirds and marine life negotiate the human-made infrastructures. At the Sofitel, he joins a group called Mo'orea Coral Gardeners, an organization that replants coral dying due to human activities. Kahn describes how the construction of overwater bungalows contributes to the destruction of marine ecosystems, a process that disrupts Mā'ohi fishing and, ironically, tourist enjoyment of the lagoons.

You can see that there are sharks and stingrays present in the next slide. The sharks and rays congregate where there is easy access to food, namely, where people may moor their boats. The sharks and rays gather to be fed, and humans often try to interact with them. Many videos exist of people attempting to grab onto the stingrays and ride them. There are often ropes for people to grab on and guide themselves through the coral. The movement through these spaces is at once very structured and totally chaotic: sharks and stingrays are generally thought of animals to be avoided or at least watched from the distance, but their perceived docility makes them uniquely exciting subjects for filming. By feeding them, humans insert themselves into a niche occupied by prey animals supported by a vibrant marine ecosystem.

The narrator does activities while wearing the GoPro, occasionally removing it to address it directly. He shows parts of his travels from Honolulu to Tahiti, and he says that he'll be there to 'make a video'. It seems that vlogging is important to him, and that vlogging and travelling are inextricably connected. He shows himself eating food and riding boats. He goofs off with his friends and narrates his travels. He lists the Instagram or twitter handles of his friends as they appear in the video, a practice that allows their accounts to gain followers.

He alternates between first-person perspectives and selfies. He shows families, the mountainous interior landscape, beaches, and explains his filming process. Shows local music, a fire dance, and swimming with sharks and rays. He takes a selfie of himself jumping onto a hotel bed in an overwater bungalow, and later indicates that he was allowed to film in the room despite not being a guest there. Later, he films himself replanting coral at the Sofitel Mo'orea, a luxury resort with overwater bungalows. The organization, Mo'orea coral gardeners organization, is planting coral cuttings in an attempt to mitigate the damage done to coral reefs by climate change and by habitat destruction. Kahn notes that the building of overwater bungalows heavily damages marine ecosystems (Kahn 2011:68).

The vlogger outright states that the coral reefs are dying, positing a sense of urgency with his activities. He displays the name of the Moorea Coral Gardeners Organization, an organization that promotes cutting and planting coral gardens in an effort to restore coral reef habitats. He shows the process of planting dead corals and, ostensibly, making them better. This action intersects with volunteer tourism, the type of tourism focusing on tourists' ostensible altruistic contributions to the places they visit.

Mary Mostafanezhad describes volunteer tourism by which tourists, who make use of their mobilities by purposefully addressing humanitarian concerns in a desire for authentic

experiences (Mostafanezhad, 2013:156). While the filmmaker I study does not volunteer with people, his desire to mitigate the damage done to coral reefs falls in line with Mostafanezhad's observations. By attempting to save a coral reef endangered by the overwater bungalows, rising temperatures, and pollution that endanger them, and taking the action to physically intervene in the natural landscape, he enacts a politicized relationship to the coral, his own mobility, and the infrastructures that brought him there and contributed to the coral's endangerment.

Then, he and some other people drive through Papeno'o valley (which he calls Jurassic park). He then goes to Maroto, a waterfall deep in the valley. He visits a fruit stand and cuts to a first-person perspective shot of himself drinking a coconut. Then, he returns to Hawai'i and wraps up his video with some closing remarks, debriefing himself and the viewer. The closed narrative loop, polished editing, and profusion of social media information positions the filmmaker as someone who highly values the organization of information in the film format.

Subtype Summary

Action activities videos seek to depict the participation of individuals and groups of people in activities that require skills, fitness, and or equipment for successful participation in said activities. A common thread running through analyses of adventure tourism and the action activities-depicting videos themselves is the understanding that the process of undertaking adventure is the process by which participants enact extraordinary behaviors and experience extraordinary circumstances. As I have previously said, these action activities-oriented activities include but are not limited to surfing, SCUBA diving, snorkeling, skydiving, off-road vehicle and animal riding, and hiking. These activities take place in specific spatio-temporal contexts and require the existence of and use of certain infrastructures.

Non-Action-Intensive

Exploring Pape'ete, Tahiti

By Mystical Footsteps

Mystical Footsteps' "Exploring Pape'ete, Tahiti" is a vlog detailing the filmmaker's visit to Pape'ete. The introduction shots include footage from other trips, establishing the filmmaker's history of traveling and documenting those travels. Then, a map of Tahiti appears and is zoomed in upon. The narrative portion of the video opens with a time lapse of the sunrise. The filmmaker narrates in the third person and facing the camera while talking to it. There is a GoPro camera attached to his chest, apparently for filming first-person shots.

The day begins outside of his hotel, which is located just outside the city center. He comments upon his lack of plans for the day before exchanging his American currency for French Pacific Francs (French Pacific Francs are used in French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia. Their value is associated with the Euro's.). He documents his trip into the center of town. While walking around, the filmmaker comments on the bus system and the ferry between Tahiti and Mo'orea. While filming Rue Reine Pomare IV, the waterfront thoroughfare, he comments on its relative lack of congestion, pointedly remarking that this place is 'Definitely not India!'. He films himself eating and describes what he ate, then discusses the expenses he has incurred. The narration is given directly into the camera, creating an illusion that the viewer is in conversation with the filmmaker.

Beginning at 3:42, the filmmaker explores the harbor. This part of the video most clearly elucidates this how the filmmaker relates to the built and natural landscapes of Tahiti. He comments upon how beautiful the water is supposed to be, how badly he wants to go see it: this sentiment echoes those articulated in response to marketing. Mā'ohi Nui's waters are marketed

as crystal-clear and teeming with life; conditions that are compromised by the presence of massive, waste-generating marine traffic. He comments on the water's appearance, stating "It's not blue, but it's clear". He hangs out by shipping containers and discusses the layout of the port and how Mo'orea looks from where he is. He freaks out about the water and the fish in the harbor, concerned about the water quality and the fishes' health. After this, he continues to film Rue Reine Pōmare IV.

This next portion of the video is an attempt to articulate with terrestrial infrastructures. He discusses his desire to climb mountains on Tahiti and about how green, fresh and 'natural' everything feels. This utterance demonstrates his understandings of human-environment relations in the context of Mā'ohi Nui: specifically that the built landscapes through which he travels can still convey 'naturalness' through their juxtaposition to what is deemed to be 'natural'. He then shows a map on screen, showing the viewer where he is and which travel guide he uses. Then, he edits in a time lapse of the harbor. Then, he describes the geography of Mā'ohi Nui. He then complains about the difficulty of obtaining and using cheap cell and Wi-Fi service where he is. Talks about how safe he feels in Tahiti. He then muses on possible transportation plans, specifically about how he might hitchhike, try to get a scooter, or a bike. He circles back to water quality, commenting on how dirty a stream in town is. He further films the sidewalks he uses to walk through town.

The final part of the video documents his travel to Mo'orea. The ferry route passes by the airport and he films the departures of various Air Tahiti flights. In addition to documenting the seascape, he takes selfies, an act that explicitly places him as a beneficiary of the infrastructure. The video ends with him calling Mo'orea a 'paradise', demonstrating his engagement with popular imagery of Mā'ohi Nui as a terrestrial paradise. It is obvious that his conceptions of

paradise are in opposition to his experiences of the quotidian, even during his travels to other places. His discursive relationship to the quotidian makes him experience different travel destinations in different ways.

“Papeete, Tahiti”

By Greg Delezynski

Greg Delezynski’s “Papeete, Tahiti” [sic] (2013) documents a cruise vacation and the filmmaker’s excursions in and around Pape’ete. The video features his companion (possibly wife) and other friends commenting on the plants they come across, particularly the sea grape, *Coccoloba uvifera*. Delezynski pans over the cityscape and seascapes and films commentary given by a Tahitian woman. At 2:50, she states that “the only wild animal on the is the sand pig. And women [sic]” (Delezynski 2013). This is a gesture towards an understanding, whether jocular or serious, about the ways in which the process of colonization and ‘civilization’ and the infrastructures facilitating it have incentivized racist imaginaries about Tahitians, particularly Tahitian women. This statement also has implications for understanding human-environment relations. Thus, this shared understanding of the intersection between ‘civilization’ and gender is a means by which humans and nature relate, particularly in the context of urbanization and the creation of Tahiti’s contemporary built landscapes. The lecture continues with the lecturer starting at 3:12 that people can ‘camp anywhere’(ibid.), obfuscating the politics of access to land and the history of land alienation experienced by Mā’ohi people.

Camping is generally seen as a low-budget accommodation and as a means by which humans can comfortably experience immersion in nature. However, homeless and impoverished people are often forced to use camping equipment as a permanent or semi-permanent dwelling.

Their use of camping equipment is a visual indication of their marginality, their differential use of state infrastructures. By stating that people can camp anywhere, wilderness is made accessible even in the context of urbanized landscapes. However, this also places people without permanent dwellings outside of humanity and into the environment. The tour guide's humorous lectures, imbued with local knowledge but marketed to tourists, mediates the tourists' experiences of the infrastructure connecting Pape'ete to the rest of Tahiti and French Polynesia. Pape'ete is just distant enough from nature, from rural areas, but still connected to it in a way that facilitates white and Western gazes upon Tahitian landscapes.

FLYING TIARE - Tahiti with a GoPro - Air Tahiti Nui

By Matt

The video opens with the Air Tahiti logo and an alarm indicating that the pilots are testing flight systems. Then, dynamic shots are taken from the airplane's wings, undercarriage, a baggage loader, and from other views. Most of the on-ground footage is taken at Fa'a'a airport. As someone who grew up in post-9/11 America, I was stunned at the degree to which the filmmaker had access to normally off-limits parts of the airplane and crew operations. However, it came to my attention that the films were sourced from ground crew, the pilots, and other people with access to controlled parts of the airplane and of aircraft maintenance. The filmmaker then transitions into shots of planes pulling in and ground controllers directing their travel. He then films from the cockpit during flight (!). He takes many close ups of the pilots pushing buttons and operating instruments.

My interest in this video stems from its novel subject matter and production. Growing up in a post-9/11 Northern Virginia has made me deeply aware of the nuances of filming in secure

locations such as airports and airplanes. The GoPro, a small, non-intrusive camera that can be worn on the body and does not have the same transmission capabilities as a cell phone, is the perfect camera for filming the intimate and granular technical aspects of flight.

Figure Five: the pilot in the cockpit



There is exciting dubstep music as he takes fast-forwarded window views and snapshots of different Air Tahiti Nui destinations flash across the screen. Old style camera shutter noises play as still images of islands (Huahine, a couple of atolls, and possibly Maupiti) flash across the screen. The trip back and forth between LA and Pape'ete is documented from multiple angles. Cutting the footage of mechanical maintenance to the rhythm of the song, offering an insight into maintenance processes while making the maintenance exciting for viewers. The video ends with more time-lapses of air travel, specifically of the sun rising and setting through the clouds. A take-off from Fa'a'a is documented, then an airplane flies through the clouds, displacing the clouds. The video ends with the filmmaker thanking the filmmakers.

Subtype Summary

The less-action-intensive activities are not necessarily just for those who laze about – I derived this type from an understanding that not all videos related to or represented action-intensive activities. I wanted to understand how people who were not doing action-intensive activities related to the landscapes through which they traveled. While the activities depicted don't necessarily require the use of specialized equipment or skills (save for the permissions and social connections used to make “Flying Tiare”), the filmmakers are still experiencing the built and natural landscapes of Tahiti Nui and Mā'ohi Nui through the use of mobility infrastructures. In this subsection, I analyze videos that seek to document educational or exploratory experiences that do not intersect with the action activities category. The exploration, in a sense, seeks to understand the intersecting temporalities of urban assemblages in ways that are accessible to viewers and convey the importance of or progression of events.

These videos are attempts to grapple with and understand, on some level, a history, culture, and spatial organization of certain places. For foreign tourists, these are attempts to understand and move through places with which they are not familiar; for people who live in these places, places that are intimately known. Many of the videos I sourced for this study have been made by anglophone (English speaking, usually native speakers) travelers, mostly those who have come from the United States, Canada, or Europe. From what viewers can see in the tourists' videos, the filmmakers interact with this new history and culture by experiencing built and natural landscapes, and their experiences are dictated and mediated by the use of these infrastructures.

For instance, a foreign tourist learns the histories and lifeways of people who are different from them through the paradigms of their own culture; that is, the ways through which they understand the world, coupled with travelers' tendencies to use infrastructures created by

entities aiming to provide governance or an order to the space, result in travelers contextualizing historical events and contemporary geopolitics through the mobility infrastructures.

Romantic Dynamics

GoPro French Polynesia Island Trip 2017

By Myriam Prieto

This is a honeymoon video with action activities elements, made and uploaded in 2017. The video opens on text detailing that the video is a honeymoon documentary. Short (3 second) clips open. The couple is staying in overwater bungalows, and the bungalows feature prominently in many of the selfies. The woman waves to the camera, looks past it as she pans across her bungalow and in front of her. She taps the husband on the back, to get his attention, and they kiss. Then they ride on horses through a pineapple plantation. They then take selfies on jet skis. They cut to a shot of them feeding sharks and stingrays. A small Giant Clam can be seen, its brightly-colored flesh contrasting with its drab shell. The resort at which they stay has a dolphin enclosure where guests may interact with captive dolphins. Many times throughout the video, the couple grabs onto the dolphin to ride it.

A stingray brushes camera and one of the filmmakers pets it. Then, they cut to shots of motus. A server gives the pair cut coconuts and a tattooed man with a woven hat feeds them. The couple parasails, taking selfies, and they go on horse rides through the landscape. They then take selfies on hammock with overwater bungalows in the background.

Figure six: Parasailing. The filmmaker on the left extends the camera behind him to capture a view of both of them and the ocean.



They proceed to do more parasailing and cuddling on a hammock. They stand-up paddleboard on the water, then cut to sharks and a hermit crab. They film the coral and then take a selfie while snorkeling, then cut to a shot of them snorkeling with mother and calf whale. Finally, they walk along the bungalow bridge, embracing each other. Like the previously discussed honeymoon video, they explicitly name the places they visit and the music they use.

The couple's interactions with the captive dolphin lay bare the ways through which mobility infrastructures allow for and facilitate certain ways of relating to the environment, and how using the GoPro further allows these relations. They grab onto the dolphin in a manner similar to other instances in which people attempt to ride stingrays. They are pulled along by the dolphin or stingray, the active party in the facsimile of transportation.

I visited this particular resort in the summer of 2018. This resort is affiliated with an organization that cares for and provides living space for some captive Bottlenose Dolphins. The dolphins live in an enclosure adjacent to the resort's lagoon, which is stocked with coral and tropical fish and is open to the ocean. For a fee, people can pay to learn about the dolphins and interact with them.

Much has been made of the ethical implications and social history of cetacean captivity. Gabriela Cowper's documentary "Blackfish" has catapulted mistreatment of cetaceans, particularly orcas (*Blackfish*, 2013). The debate surrounding orca and dolphin captivity in the United States is often couched in differing understandings of personhood and animal intelligence. The relationship between humans, cetaceans, and the built and natural landscapes through which they move are framed through the animal's status as a highly intelligent mammal. The animal's intelligence is understood to be the reason why it should not be kept in captivity (Grimm, 2011; "Debunking Captivity," 2014).

By interacting with the dolphin in a context of captivity, a captivity that facilitates interactions with animals whose nomadic nature and the fact that they live in the ocean render them inaccessible to humans, humans enact a relationship to the environment that fundamentally relies upon the presence and continued use of mobility infrastructures, in this context infrastructures developed to configure the environment so that that which inhabits and moves through the 'natural' landscapes (that is, wild animals and coral reefs, the non-human animals and the non-human built living structures that provide habitats and, eventually, geological substrates for islands) is bound by the built landscape for human-centered uses.

GoPro: Moorea Polynésie française - French Polynesia 2014

By Jm Bouix

This video is a honeymoon video with action activities elements. It was made and uploaded in 2014. This video, another honeymoon documentary, opens on a couple walking along the road in a town on Mo'orea. One of the filmmakers, a woman, holds her thumb out as if to hitchhike. At the 00:06 mark, they walk in the shallow water towards a boat taking them to a

motu. The camera work is quite shaky – the filmmakers appear to be excited, nervous, or cannot hold the camera still for another reason. They film their entrance to an overwater bungalow. One of the filmmakers zooms in on decoration and ahead of himself as he walks into his bungalow. It is simple and poorly lit, making it hard to distinguish the bungalow's features. The woman sits at a table. He leaves through the door at the other side, slowing down as he looks at Tahiti, just across the channel. Then, his partner and other people go snorkeling or swimming in an area cordoned off with buoys and ropes. There are lots of fish, as if they are expecting to be fed. The woman and a small child try to pet a stingray.

There is a Moray eel right in the lens of the camera, a surprising approach given the danger of a nasty bite. A Black-Tip Reef Shark is shown, then he takes selfie shot of him holding onto some rope and being surrounded by fish. He continues the selfie shot and throws in a shaka, a gesture generally associated with Hawai'i. Then, there is a very slow shot of a manta ray approaching the camera. A woman swims with sharks. A woman grabs onto a stingray as if she wants to ride it. The rest of the video is them riding rays and feeding the marine life underwater.

voyage de noce polynésie février 2016 - gopro
by marine guelenec

This video is a honeymoon video with action activity elements taken and uploaded in 2016. The action elements include SCUBA diving and snorkeling. The filmmakers open with an interior shot of their hotel room. They then tour the hotel grounds, the whole time looking lovingly at each other. They pan across beach and the hotel grounds, go swimming in the on-site pool, take selfies, and kiss in front of the camera. They then play in the pool. Then, a small sea turtle is shown in a holding pen close to the resort's on-site lagoon. The resort at which they stay,

the InterContinental Mo'orea, is affiliated with Te Mana o te Moana, a nonprofit dedicated to marine conservation. They run a sea turtle clinic in the hopes of preventing the animals' extinction due to anthropogenic climate change and habitat destruction. The juxtaposition of this turtle care center and the on-site dolphin enclosure, where bottlenose dolphins are kept in a shallow enclosure and guests may interact with them, are unsettling.

This portion of the video, towards the end, is less structured and less edited overall. Long stretches of uncut. Footage are favored rather than the creation of a rhythm of images. The filmmakers film long stretches of a Tahitian dance show, eventually speeding it up to their documentation of a kayaking trip. They then SCUBA dive, then turn the camera around to take a selfie and waves at the camera. While feeding the fish, the filmmakers pull themselves along rope in ocean to follow the activity.

Subtype Summary

In 2018, around 17% of tourist arrivals in Mā'ohi Nui listed honeymoon or marriage as their main motivation for their trip (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynésie française, 2018). This statistic does not illuminate the total populace of romance travelers, however: those who travel for anniversaries, vow renewals, or simply to have fun together may not necessarily not reflected by the categories listed on entry surveys. Many honeymoon videos contain footage of the filmmakers participating in activities associated with the action activities genre of videos. All of the of the honeymoon videos I have pulled as examples contain action activities. Many people travel to Mā'ohi Nui to snorkel or dive: the warm waters, visibility, and relative ease of access from accommodation make snorkeling and diving appealing. The Tuamotus are especially renowned by divers and snorkelers. I think that this phenomenon occurs because the activities

associated with the action activities-oriented genre appeal to young, well-to-do honeymooners and to the fact that the accommodations at which they stay offer access to these action activities.

Honeymoon videos appear to serve a dual purpose: they serve to both document and share the couple's experiences and center the romantic dynamics of the relationship. More often than not, the couple display their affection for each other through gestures, utterances, and accompanying texts. They also exhibit a desire to be close to and intimately experience nature. The gestures indicating human love are preformed simultaneously with the intimacy between humans and the nature in which they immerse themselves. The displays are captured when the filmmakers (I say filmmakers because, more often than not, both members of the couple are responsible for filming) take selfies. By taking selfies and depicting public displays of affection, the couple constructs a way through which they relate to the place through which they travel and activities in which they participate. They demonstrate that the relationship permeates their participation in travel and the activities in which they participate.

Non-Romantic Dynamics

Tahitian Escape with Bianca Buitendag and Johanne Defay

By GoPro

This video consists of interview footage cut with footage of the participants surfing, swimming, paddling their surfboards while sharks swim around them, hiking, and filming themselves doing all of those things. It opens with an opening screen created by GoPro, Inc. and disseminated in GoPro's video editing software. The camera is shown, and then reveals the GoPro name along with the company slogan, which is 'Be a hero.' The two participants are

professional surfers Bianca Buitendag and Johanne Defay. Buitendag is South African and Defay is French. The women discuss their friendship, and how friendship grounds and supports them through their hectic competition schedule.

They talk about how beautiful and relaxing Tahiti is, framing it in opposition to the fast-paced nature of their daily lives as professional surfers. Watching the women take turns filming themselves while someone else films them forms an interesting spatio-temporal relationship between the viewer, the unseen filmmaker, and the two women who occupy the dual niche of filmmaker and filmed subject. At 2:06, Defay films in selfie view and they both leap off of their boards into the water. The footage takes place in areas that could be understood to be ‘natural’. There is not a trace of other people in sight until the end credits, which feature advertisements for the other products. Other surfers can be seen as one of the women pans across the ocean while taking a selfie.

Tahiti island – Teahupoo

By Saulius Norkevicius

This video is entirely front-facing, first-person perspective. The camera is placed on a head mount, and the filmmaker’s limbs and torso are visible for much of the video. The video itself is largely uneventful-the footage is entirely unedited and the narrative progresses in real time. This video was filmed in Teahupo’o, a location heavily associated with amateur and professional surfing. The name is recognizable to surfing enthusiasts – it conveys a sense of gravity due to the difficulty and danger of surfing there.

The filmmaker and his family attempt a sketchy-looking descent down and across a cliff adjacent to the ocean. The constant rush of the wind and waves is punctuated with dialogue in an

unknown European language and in French. At 2:40, the group uses a rope and step affixed to a rock to descend. Two guides help the couple and their two children as they negotiate the steep and vegetated terrain to a freshwater stream. They stand and swim in the waterfall pool, excited to be surrounded by such natural beauty. The trail is covered in roots and rocks, making the walking difficult for these older adults and children. They are also not wearing proper hiking shoes. Their guides, who are barefoot, negotiate the terrain with ease. As the group follows the trail, they pause to talk and take in the scenery. They follow the stream into a cave, climb through the cave, and end up at a waterfall. Suddenly, a large group of white people is revealed. After a few moments, he turns the camera off.

Subtype Summary

The familial and platonic subtype, just like the honeymoon and romance subtype I discuss later, seeks to situate and document a relationship between two or more people in the contexts of different activities and places. Familial and platonic videos aim to document the relationships between family members and friends as they travel to and through Mā'ohi Nui. As I discuss in the honeymoon and romance video section, the familial and platonic relationship dynamics are performed in order to contextualize and frame how the filmmaker and their party relate to each other during their participation in certain activities. The fundamental activity documented is thus the act of being in a relationship. Whereas the honeymoon and romantic subtype centers a romantic relationship, the familial and platonic relationships depicted centers platonic and familial relationships, and romantic relationships (for instance, between parents or members of a traveling party) are viewed as individual units within the context of a traveling party, not the sole reason for traveling.

These filmmakers tend to participate in similar activities as those depicted in the other subtypes while also filming the interactions between their members of the party. It is this documentation process that lays the relationships bare for viewers to see. The relationships would not be revealed to us were it not for the documentation process and the performance of the relationships themselves.

Conclusions

To conclude, these videos allow for an embodied experience of mobility infrastructures' mediation of built and natural landscapes. The camera's technological aspects, which include its small size, its compatibility with equipment that facilitates the camera's use in environments that are inimical to the operation of many consumer-grade cameras, its ease of use, and the marketing incentivizing of certain uses of the camera.

The relationships and activities depicted are means through which people can relate to the environment. Whereas relationships are means of contextualizing and framing the arrangements of people traveling to and through Mā'ohi Nui, activities are means through which travelers actively relate to the built and natural landscapes comprising Mā'ohi Nui.

These videos demonstrate how travelers interact with mobility infrastructures, using them as a means through which to travel to and through Mā'ohi Nui. The infrastructures represented in the videos include transportation infrastructures such as roads, airports, maritime routes, and ports; tourist industry support architecture including hotels and resorts, cruise ships, tourist excursion vehicles, and tourist industry employees; legal and governance infrastructures and institutions such as airport and maritime borders (the polity of French Polynesia is a series of archipelagoes, no land borders exist aside from the beach), law enforcement institutions such as

police officers, judges, and military personnel; laws regulating and building and movement; natural resource infrastructures such as barriers between human-accessible landscapes and human-inaccessible landscapes, fences or other barriers between agricultural and non-agricultural vegetated and populated spaces, trails and means through which natural landscapes and built landscapes are connected, and restricted access or use areas where elements of the landscape or its inhabitants are preserved. The use of infrastructure facilitates not only the movement of people, but the movement of equipment needed to facilitate participation in the activities depicted in the videos.

Chapter IV: Conclusions

Introduction

Inside the videos and the typology that describes the narratives are ensconced different politicized relations to infrastructures, which in turn transform the landscapes. The transformation of the landscape is documented through the embodied process of filmmaking, in which travel to and through these landscapes is both facilitated by these infrastructures and used as representations for travel through time and space. The technology democratizes these representations; far from ephemera and private, temporary images, the images captured through the use of GoPro cameras live forever on YouTube. The filmmakers' friends, family, and interested strangers are welcomed into their experiences. The process of sharing images, particularly those of the infrastructures with which the travelers interact, makes the process of development and transformation of the landscape by the development of infrastructures

What do the occurrences documented in the videos under study have to do with the relations between humans, mobility infrastructures, and the environment? The short answer is everything. The interactions between humans and infrastructures as seen in the videos, and the interactions between the infrastructures and the built and natural landscapes transform and beings the infrastructures demonstrate how people understand the infrastructures' transformations. The representations, shared through YouTube and explicitly linked to the use of GoPro cameras, Following Kahn's (2011) argument that Tahiti and Tahiti Nui are assembled from a multitude of socially constructed spaces, it becomes apparent that the videos, the activities taking place in the videos, the filmmakers, the filmed people, the viewer, and the places themselves are assembled in specific ways (ways that are the results of the GoPro's technical aspects and the realities of that which is filmed).

The technopolitics of mediation as it pertains to both infrastructure and GoPro-mediated representations is predicated upon the politicized relationships between humans and the environment. Since infrastructures in Mā'ohi Nui, such as roads around an island's circumference or through mountainous interiors, ferry services that transport bureaucrats, students, workers, and travelers between Mo'orea and Tahiti, the airports on Tahiti and Hao (the air base on Hao was a staging area for the CEP activities on Moruroa and Fangataufa, and for a long time the island was closed to international visitors (de Vries & Seur, 1997)). which vibrate with the tendrils of weaponized chaotic energy, and the insidious tendrils of radiation blooming in Moruroa and Fangataufa, and the strain of hotel gardens on local water supplies.

I dive into an analysis of the politicized relationships between humans and the environment as made manifest through infrastructures. As I have repeatedly stated throughout this thesis, mediation is a sort of politicized relationship between that which is mediated and that which consumes the mediation. I also build upon my discussion of the technopolitics of the GoPro camera that I began in chapter two.

Technopolitics is the study of power articulated through science and technology. Recall Latour's argument that science and scientific instruments are means through which nature is made known to humans (Latour 2004:69). Cameras, being an extension of and potentially understood as an improvement on human faculties of sight, are thus an extension of human perception. As I have previously stated, the power to take, disseminate, and edit images are a means through which power can be deployed.

Cameras and other image making technology must be understood as means through which knowledge about the world is produced. The creation and dissemination of images is not

only a mediation practice, but the means through which the representational canon creates a corpus of standardized representations. Following Latour's argument that science is a means through which knowledge is produced (Latour 2004), and the use of scientific knowledge is an attempt to standardize the landscape and creation of images to facilitate exchange and governance. This is synthesized in the development of mobility infrastructures that facilitate tourism and the continued neocolonial governance of Mā'ohi Nui.

Azoulay describes the political ontology of photography and its status as both a political and documentary referent (Azoulay 2010:loc 525), meaning that the act of representing occupies a dual role as both a means to communicate information about power and an act of collecting information to be retained and disseminated. Ontologies are the studies of the nature of being, the fundamental realities of existence. Azoulay elaborates upon her use of the term 'political ontology':

The ontology of photography that I seek to promote is, in fact, a political ontology—an ontology of the many, operating in public, in motion. It is an ontology bound to the manner in which human beings exist—look ,talk, act—with one another and *with objects*...By this [political ontology] I mean an ontology of a certain form of human being-with-others in which the camera or the photograph are implicated. (Azoulay 2012:loc. 428-434. Emphasis original.)

Azoulay's ontology (that is, the fundamental realities of the camera, photography, and the photographer's existence) describes the ways through which documentation and representation are politicized – that is, they deploy and represent the power dynamics between the Israeli state and Palestinians. Photography is thus a means of relating power to a referent and to a viewer. *Civil Imagination* details the ways through which the built environment, specifically the architecture of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, is subject to the conflicting political and documentary acts of the Israeli state, Israelis, and Palestinians. While I will not be focusing on the ontologies of GoPro cameras and the images their users produce while interacting with

mobility infrastructures, I found Azoulay's descriptions of the fundamental political relationships between photographers, the photographed, and the processes of colonization represented in certain contexts.

The fact is that videos posted to YouTube occupy a different place in public consciousnesses and play different roles in the perpetuation and creation of visual culture than cinema does. I do not foreclose upon the undeniable overlaps between the media, but I encourage those interested to observe that, while cinema depictions of the Pacific and videos of people traveling through Pacific share genealogies of militarization. The infrastructures that enable tourists and tourist-filmmakers to visit and move around in certain spaces are the artefacts of colonialism and capitalism. The social and technological infrastructures that engendered militarization and the installation of governance structures modeled after Western systems both rely on and sustain the extraction of natural resources and of images (Kahn, 2011).

Recall my assertion that infrastructures transform landscapes and that the use of GoPro cameras further mediates places, a process which produces and reproduces a particular kind of human-environment relations. Recall again how I build upon Hau'ofa's essential argument that Pacific places are embiggened by the connections between them. Whiles sharing images can work to make that place more visible or more known by increasingly large audiences, sharing images without context (it's so hard to add context to YouTube videos. What would a content creator do? Write a thesis?)

In earlier drafts of this thesis, I struggled to articulate whether or not infrastructures worked to mediate or transform landscapes. I closely associated the processes of mediation and transformation, to the point where I was unable to distinguish between them. What pained me the most was that I saw mediation as a type of transformation: I understood mediation to be a

process wherein that which was mediated was rendered accessible, and that process of rendering accessible somehow fundamentally transformed that which was mediated. I am no philosopher; I merely want to explore articulations between mediation and transformation in the context of mediation and representations in this specific pipeline of GoPro camera to Tahiti to YouTube to consumers.

I emphasize the importance of people's movements and utterances in my summary of the video content because movements and utterances are the keys to understanding how people relate to the environment and to the infrastructures that facilitate these relationships. The ways through which people move through their surroundings (that is, built and natural landscapes) both gesture towards and influence how they relate to them.

As I have previously stated, the GoPro camera serves not only as a mediator of experiences and landscapes, but also as a means through which people can indicate their relationships to the activities that influence and demonstrate human-environment relationships. The equipment used to affix the GoPro to the body or the equipment facilitates the positioning of the newest line of cameras, the HERO7, can be operated with voice commands and links to streaming services without needing a computer (GoPro, n.d.). Mostafanezhad's article "The Politics of Aesthetics in Volunteer Tourism" (2013) discusses the ways in which the articulation of humanitarian service and representations of that service work to prevent critical engagement with poverty and colonial violence.

Although my work does not dive in depth into volunteer tourism, I found Mostafanezhad's critiques of atomized aesthetic entanglements with structural inequality to be very useful. Mostafanezhad asserts that tourists articulate with power dynamics that seek to locate the power to enact larger change in individuals (Mostafanezhad 2013:151), a process that

echoes the atomization of identity and desire to express individual identity and taste through consumption seen in GoPro-mediated representations. Rather than dealing with individual impacts on structural inequality, the videos under study seek to track individual or small group engagements with both the process of documentation through the use of a specific camera and the colonial mobility infrastructures that facilitate their travel to and through Tahiti Nui.

My findings may be summarized as follows: the videos demonstrate how people understand and represent interactions with colonial mobility infrastructures. These infrastructures facilitate movement of capital, people, goods, and ideas across Tahiti Nui and to and from the world beyond Tahiti. People use the GoPro camera, a camera that is designed to document activities and places that were, during the time before the invention of the GoPro and cameras like it, unfilmable. These activities were deemed unfilmable because the conditions in which they took place were dangerous to camera, to those operating them, and to the images the operators want to capture. While I watched that old French man hand-hold his camera in the water to film feeding sharks, watched a honeymooning couple jump out of a perfectly good airplane to go skydiving, and watched thousands of pounds of churning water close over Garrett McNamara, I naturally began to wonder how many other videos these or other people took, and how many of those videos consisted of blown takes – blurry images, orientation towards the wrong object of focus, or even losing or breaking the camera. Even the video titles play into the narratives of camera survivability – Garrett McNamara's *"Garrett McNamara" "Teahupoo" "Tahiti" 3 angles, "GoPro" survived wipeout* (2013) is a story in of itself: McNamara's 3-camera setup was able to effectively capture all angles of his wipeout and still survive the event.

The GoPro camera allows for mobilities enabled by the use of mobility infrastructures to be shared through digital infrastructures such as the internet and social media sites. Studying

online mobilities of these places and people is something I would like to continue, but for the sake of brevity I will not dive too deeply into the digital infrastructures supporting the sharing of and growth of the representational corpus. It would be good to do a deeper discursive analysis of video co-texts – comments, titles and intertitles, and descriptions.

Much of the writing about GoPro, Inc. casts Woodman , the company’s founder, as an intrepid adventurer who creates these cameras out of a genuine desire to make technologies of visuality and storytelling available to wider audiences. His image is that of a hyper-masculine but playful creative and technological visionary who spends his leisure time engaging in interesting and expensive hobbies that further this image. Discourses surrounding Woodman and his company have flourished as part of critiques rooted in critical race studies, gender studies, science and technology studies, and media studies.

Despite the viral nature of many GoPro videos and the prominence the company has gained during its existence, the company has not escaped financial difficulties. Perhaps most infamously, the Karma drone series experienced dangerous malfunctions, tanking the company’s reputation and endangering it financially. GoPro, Inc. laid off 250 employees and cancelled its drone line (Roettgers & Roettgers, 2018).

Another difficulty facing GoPro is the massive improvement in the quality of mobile phone cameras. Although mobile phone cameras may be slightly more cumbersome to use, their convenience, access to internet and social media, and prevalence may offer some stiff competition to the camera company. However, given GoPro’s reliance on and heavy investment in its content empire and lifestyle branding, the multi-pronged investment in hardware, software and social media has anchored the company’s presence in the minds of millions. For example, at

one point, the brand's channel had been regarded as one of the best content producers on YouTube (Sloane, 2014).

Recalling Scott's (1998) and Carse's (2014) arguments that the nature of infrastructure and other means through which to expand the built environment as the human population expands, we can also understand how infrastructures act as means through which the built and natural environments mutually mediate. Nature has a multitude of definitions and those definitions can be distilled into this: nature is fundamentally that which is removed from humanity through the demarcation of built and natural landscapes. Infrastructures are, themselves, built by humans. Andrew Barry situates infrastructures within a spatio-temporal dynamic predicated on the infrastructures' vulnerabilities to disruption by so-called 'natural' causes (Barry 2016). That is, the natural landscape rendered accessible and legible by the infrastructure is also endangering it. Many political ecologists understand nature and non-human entities to be agentic actors; that is, these beings have an imperative to hold their space and an imperative to preserve themselves.

The process of creating and using infrastructures as a means of bringing the natural and built into contact both renders the built infrastructure dually vulnerable to nature. In GoPro videos representing travelers' articulations and interactions with mobility infrastructures in Tahiti Nui, the 'natural' and the 'built' are not so far from each other: that which is built is often made in the image of the natural (such as the construction of lagoons with coral and fish on resort properties) and the natural is heavily influenced by the presence of the built (for instance, the coral reef replanting scene I described in chapter three).

Castree and Cronon critique human exceptionalism, or the understandings that humans are somehow removed from nature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of the so-called 'noble

savage’, for example, stems from an ideological construct that placed the ‘rational’, the intelligent, the developed, the evolved, etc. above the ‘natural’. This was one of many paradigms which lead to racist and colonial violence experienced by black, indigenous, and people of color all over the world. Further studies of the environmental racism of infrastructural development in Mā’ohi Nui are necessary.

I envision built landscapes, particularly urbanized areas, as being in in continuous and fluid relationships with their environments. These environments include suburban areas, rural areas, proscribed ‘wilderness’ engendered by conservation or preservation, and ‘wilderness’ as land excluded from development due to inaccessibility. It was through the violence of colonization and the incorporation of indigenous peoples into globalized capitalism that inexorably altered indigenous cosmologies, relationships to landscapes, and relationships to histories. This radical derangement of political ecologies has been transformed today into economic and social development schemes aimed at rectifying the material and social inequalities that plague these previously or currently colonized places. One of these methods of development is the creation and perpetuation of tourism industries.

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Despite the fact that Pacific peoples thrived on what European visitors considered to be small and far-flung islands, the Europeans immediately began to understand that these islands had plenty of natural resources. These resources, however, were not simply mineral and biotic resources: the resources began to include bodies, labor, and images as well. Margaret Jolly, Bernard Smith, and Tarcisius Kabutaulaka all posit that creating a canon of representations of the Pacific was instrumental in implementing the infrastructures that engendered colonialism and the unequal material and power relationships that persist today (Jolly 2007, Smith 1950, Kabutaulaka 2015).

It becomes apparent when one watches GoPro videos that the individual’s perspective is privileged. This privileging of individual first-person perspectives echoes Jane Bennett’s assertion that the vitality and agency of non-human things (a term she calls ‘thing-power’) is predicated upon the thing’s existence in an assemblage, or collection, of things.

A second, related disadvantage of *thing-power* is its latent individualism, by which I mean the way in which the figure of “thing” lends itself to an atomistic rather than a

congregational understanding of agency. While the smallest or simplest body or bit may indeed express a vital impetus, conatus or *clinamen*, an actant never really acts alone. Its efficacy or agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces. (Bennett 2010:loc 162)

The collection of things is the material realities of the GoPro, the people who use them, and the built and natural landscapes they use and exist in. For instance, the climate and weather events may decay roads and disrupt maritime routes, changing the course of a filmmaker's narrative. The GoPro could malfunction or come with a manufacturing defect, or if you're using a Karma the drone could plummet from the sky! The human filmmaker could become ill, develop a fear response in the water, and illicit fear in the animals surrounding them. A deeper and more granular dive into the mechanisms of mechanical and other non-living agencies is necessitated but goes beyond the scope of this paper.

In their actions, I saw thousands of unseen people clambering on the coral, riding captive dolphins and habituated stingrays in a sad facsimile of transportation, anxiety-inducing underwater first-person shots of shark feedings, and other direct interactions between humans and non-human beings. One by one, the couples descended from the truck bed, returning to their accommodations. I was finally alone with my thoughts. The late afternoon light was a golden wash, filling all but the most recalcitrant vegetal and human-begotten shadows. As we drove down the pale, narrow road between one end of the most populous motu with the other, the engine drowned out the steady ocean winds and driving waves. I began to wonder just how many GoPros lay at the bottom of the lagoon and how the interactions between people and their environment and the infrastructure that renders them mutually accessible, how many hours of footage decay from the computer chips on which they are encoded, how many hands grasped the widening gulf between the falling camera and the matter between it and the grasping hand.

Conclusions

My observations have been reflected in the videos I studied. These videos allow viewers replicate individual experiences of the infrastructures mediating the built and natural landscapes of Mā'ohi Nui. This research has implications for the (multi)disciplines of media studies, science and technology studies, Pacific (Islands) studies, and geography and for discussions surrounding the natures of representations of infrastructures as they articulate with politicized human-environment relations. My future research will dive deeper into the articulations between tourism and natural resource extraction. Because images themselves are resources, and natural resources are themselves a mediation of the environment by humans, images articulate with the history of natural resource extraction. My future research will dive deeper into the articulations between these titanic and world-changing industries.

For now, I conclude with an analysis of a quote I placed in the preface. JJAdventures, a content creator whose video I have studied and described, placed the following text at the end of their video: 'We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us!' (JJAdventures 2016). The content creator thus frames life in terms aspiration and excitement, not something that burdens. As demonstrated through the ways in which people represent their travels to and through Tahiti Nui and Mā'ohi Nui, travel and representations of it are means through which people relate to the environment, as are the activities in which they partake and the dynamics of the relationships between the filmmakers. These relations are the products of the filmmakers' positioned identities, globalizing capital, and the ways in which people relate to infrastructures and infrastructures relate to non-human entities in built and natural landscapes.

The main points of this thesis are that infrastructures work to mediate built and natural landscape so that exchanges and travel may occur. The fact that the infrastructures are used to

mediate built and natural landscapes and by people using GoPro cameras reveals the ways through which infrastructures are understood to bring the built and natural landscapes into contact for the sake of facilitating movement of capital, people, and ideas. These infrastructures facilitated French the colonial presence and continue to maintain the flow of globalizing capital through the spaces of Tahiti Nui and French Polynesia. The facilitation of travel and investment of capital is part of the tourism development project Infrastructures are subject to the agencies of human and non-human beings that inhabit the built and natural landscapes. The filmmakers' and the camera's agencies act upon the infrastructures as well. The typology is useful for understanding the motivations for traveling to and through Tahiti Nui, Mā'ohi Nui, and French Polynesia because analyzing the activities and relationship dynamics contextualizes the travel to and through these spaces. Understanding the narratives underpinning this travel is helpful for understanding how people may come to represent their interactions with colonial mobility infrastructures here and abroad.

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